

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2023

Administrator Shailen Bhatt
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bhatt:

We write to request the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) expedite its technical review of the Cape Cod Canal Bridges project to replace the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges.

The Bourne and Sagamore Bridges are the sole access point for vehicular traffic to and from Cape Cod for the more than 35 million vehicles that cross the Cape Cod Canal annually. The bridges serve as essential routes for general transportation, tourism, and evacuations in case of an emergency. They are vital assets for the Cape Cod economy and surrounding communities, and serve as the gateway to Cape Cod for more than 260,000 Cape and Islands residents and 5 million visitors annually.¹ However, the current bridges are nearly 90 years old, functionally obsolete, and require increasingly costly maintenance.² The bridges' structural deficiencies present a risk to the safety, accessibility, and economic stability of the Cape Cod region.

The Sagamore and Bourne Bridges are owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and are therefore a federal responsibility. USACE, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and other stakeholders have partnered to develop a plan to replace both the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges and the highway approaches to the bridges. The project will lead to contemporary bridges that vastly improve travel conditions, meet modern safety standards for vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and provide significantly improved multimodal travel.

We have been advocating for federal funding for this project for the last decade, and most recently, have been working with Assistant Secretary for Civil Works Michael Connor and Governor Maura Healey to facilitate continued collaboration between USACE and MassDOT and ensure they submit competitive applications for the next round of federal funding through

1 Cape Cod Times, "Sagamore, Bourne bridges have brought prosperity, loyalty and now worries to Cape Cod," Asad Jung, May 27, 2022, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/story/news/2022/05/27/cape-cod-canal-bridges-brought-prosperity-loyalty-worries/9688301002/>; WGBH, "Federal funding for Cape Cod bridges project denied a second time," Bob Seay, January 5, 2023, <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2023/01/05/federal-funding-for-cape-cod-bridges-project-denied-a-second-time>.

2 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "Cape Cod Canal Highway Bridges Bourne, Massachusetts, Major Rehabilitation Evaluation Report," November 9, 2018, <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Portals/74/docs/Topics/Cape%20Cod%20Canal%20Bridges/Reports/MRERAppendixF.pdf>; WGBH, "Federal funding for Cape Cod bridges project denied a second time," Bob Seay, January 5, 2023, <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2023/01/05/federal-funding-for-cape-cod-bridges-project-denied-a-second-time>.


the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* — particularly for the Bridge Investment Program (BIP). To that end, USACE and MassDOT jointly requested a comprehensive technical review from FHWA to explore the scope, schedule, and cost of the Cape Cod Canal Bridges project. We understand that USACE and MassDOT submitted all of the required documents well ahead of FHWA’s requested deadline; FHWA staff conducted an initial assessment of these materials last week; and FHWA, USACE and MassDOT are scheduled to meet starting on May 22 for four days of in-person review.

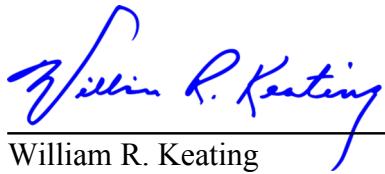
Time is of the essence for USACE and MassDOT to adequately prepare for upcoming federal funding opportunities. We urge FHWA to dedicate all necessary resources to accelerate the technical review of this critical project. Furthermore, we request FHWA provide a preliminary verbal debrief of key aspects of the USACE/MassDOT plan by June 2. This initial feedback is vital to the collective USACE/MassDOT effort to prepare for the next federal funding application round, which we anticipate to open in the coming weeks. Finally, we urge FHWA to expedite completion of its report outlining findings from the technical review by June 16 to enable USACE and MassDOT to incorporate the expertise and insights from FHWA in its proposal.

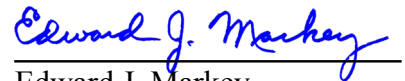
We will continue to do our part to push the agencies on continued coordination, but we want to be clear: the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges are federal assets and it is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure this project is best positioned to compete for federal funding. The residents, businesses and visitors of Cape Cod deserve safe and reliable public infrastructure, and we remain fully committed to working with federal, state and local partners to achieve this shared goal.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


William R. Keating
Member of Congress


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator