

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 17, 2019

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite
Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

The Honorable Rickey “R.D.” James
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Lieutenant General Semonite and Assistant Secretary James:

Thank you for your commitment to addressing the infrastructure needs of the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Our offices were pleased to be joined by representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) at a recent stakeholder meeting in Boston on the Cape Cod Canal Bridges. However, we are concerned by the possibility discussed at this meeting that the USACE’s national headquarters may still choose to repair and rehabilitate the existing Canal bridges rather than build two new structures as the USACE’s New England District previously recommended.¹ Replacing both the Bourne and Sagamore is not only the best solution for the Cape and Islands, it is the only viable long-term solution for the nearly 250,000 residents and businesses of the region who rely on this vital connection to the rest of Massachusetts. We urge you to adopt the recommendation of the USACE’s New England District: full replacement of both Canal Bridges.

The USACE’s New England District recently concluded in its Draft Major Rehabilitation Evaluation Report that the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges are structurally deficient and in desperate need of replacement.² The New England District further determined that a full replacement of both bridges is more cost-effective than repairing and rehabilitating the existing structures. We were pleased by this conclusion and applauded the New England District’s recommendation to build two new bridges that will each have four through-traffic lanes and two auxiliary lanes. We strongly believe that this proposal is the only way to ensure that the Canal Bridges can provide robust access to and from the Cape and Islands, while also meeting modern safety specifications and addressing growing traffic needs.

¹ Cape Cod Times, “Army Corps: Replace the Cape Cod Canal Bridges,” Ethan Genter, October 4, 2019, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/news/20191003/army-corps-replace-cape-cod-canal-bridges>.

² U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, “Cape Cod Canal Bridges Major Rehabilitation Evaluation Study,” <https://capecodcanalbridgesstudy.com/>.

In order to further this recommendation, Senator Markey hosted a meeting in Boston on December 6, 2019, with representatives from Senator Warren and Congressman Keating's offices. This meeting convened federal, state, and local stakeholders to discuss a joint financing plan to replace the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges. We were pleased by the progress made toward identifying funding streams for the project, but remain concerned by any suggestion that the USACE may not decide to recommend the complete replacement of these structures subject to appropriations. The best investment of federal resources is a full replacement of both Canal Bridges, and a prompt decision by the USACE's national headquarters to adopt the New England District's recommendation will aid our efforts to secure the necessary funding in Congress.

We therefore urge you to finalize a replacement plan as soon as possible, request the necessary financing in the President's Budget, and work with us on completing this essential infrastructure project for the Cape and Islands.

Thank you for your full attention to this important matter. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact our offices at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


William R. Keating
Member of Congress