

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 9, 2014

The Honorable Therese W. McMillan
Acting Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, Southeast
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Administrator McMillan,

We write to urge your office to expedite its review of applications for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Emergency Relief Program funds because time is of the essence for repair and replacement of a critical bridge on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail network.

The Walk Bridge in Norwalk, Connecticut spans the Norwalk River and serves as a crucial part of the NEC rail network. Each day, 140 Metro-North and Amtrak trains cross it. But two weeks ago, the 118-year-old movable rail bridge became stuck in an open position, and this halted all rail traffic on that section of Metro-North's New Haven Line for nearly six hours and disrupted Amtrak service as well. And then last Friday, the bridge failed yet again, disrupting the commutes of many for hours. These malfunctions have resulted in a needless strain on thousands of commuters who have been forced to endure a staggering number of service problems over the past year.

In April, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) applied for \$603 million through the FTA's Emergency Relief Program. Of that \$603 million, \$349 million would be allocated to cover 75 percent of the cost of replacing the Walk Bridge. The state would provide a 25 percent funding match. The remaining \$254 million would be allocated to projects that strengthen the integrity and resiliency of the state's passenger rail system.

As we wrote to your office on April 17, 2014, the Connecticut delegation is united in its support for ConnDOT's application. The Walk Bridge replacement project is an ideal candidate for program funds, which are dedicated to transit operators affected by Hurricane Sandy. That devastating storm dramatically demonstrated the need to harden and protect the frail, deteriorating bridge, which was built in 1896 during President Grover Cleveland's second term.

These recent bridge failures are further urgent reminders that this structure must be replaced immediately, otherwise Connecticut's commuters and the entire economy of the

Northeast region remain at risk. Accordingly, we call upon you to ensure that ConnDOT's applications are given prompt and timely consideration.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



ROSA L. DELAURO
Member of Congress



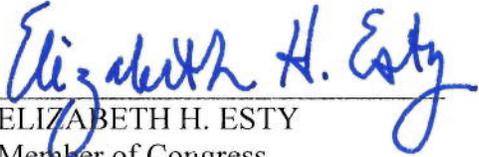
JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress



JIM HIMES
Member of Congress



ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress