

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1803

July 18, 2019

Governor John Bel Edwards
Office of the Governor
PO Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Governor Edwards,

I write to you today with concern over the growing infrastructure needs of Southwest Louisiana (SWLA), specifically the needed actions by state and local officials to move us closer to a new Calcasieu I-10 bridge. As you know, projects such as Cheniere's Sabine Pass LNG, Tellurian's Driftwood LNG, and Sempra's Cameron LNG are quickly turning Southwest Louisiana into the leading energy corridor for the entire nation. The rapid growth of the LNG industry, coupled with billions in investments into other petrochemical facilities in the region has led to significant growing pains. This is highlighted by several significant infrastructure needs in the area, most notably the I-10 Calcasieu Bridge.

As you know, since coming to Congress, I have heavily focused on the need for a new I-10 bridge to complement growth in the region's economy and job market. While I have focused the last two and half years on this bridge, it is by no means a new issue. The current I-10 Calcasieu River bridge opened for traffic in 1952 and was designed for a traffic load of 37,000 crossings per day with a 50-year life span. In 2016, the average daily crossings were over 80,000.

While the current bridge is structurally sound, it is well past its life span and fails to meet modern safety standards. The region has expressed the need for a new bridge since the 1990s. Since that time, progress on a replacement has been dismal or completely stagnant. This is due to various lawsuits and the needed completion of an Environmental Impact Statement. It is imperative that more progress is made on this project immediately. President Trump brought national attention to the region and the need for a new bridge during his May 2019 trip to Cameron LNG. During this trip, he specifically mentioned the need for a new bridge to ensure the region and the state can fully reap the economic benefits of the industrial expansions.

While I appreciate your administration's past attention to this issue, especially that of Secretary Shawn Wilson, I believe now is the time to turn Baton Rouge's full attention toward

Southwest Louisiana and give the region the resources it needs to fully realize the potential of hundreds of billions in private investment.

A strong and vibrant Southwest Louisiana will benefit the entire state, and the road towards this goal starts with a new I-10 Calcasieu River bridge. Again, I stand ready to assist the State as it deals with any federal issues with the bridge, and I urge you to remedy the remaining state and local government issues that are delaying this important project.

I respectfully request that agreements on a plan for the bridge be made a priority for the state, and once a plan is decided upon it be pursued expeditiously.

Respectfully,


Clay Higgins
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary Shawn Wilson
LA DOTD Headquarters
1201 Capitol Access Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70802