

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington D.C. 20590

Secretary Buttigieg,

We write to you today in support of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application submitted by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) for the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge Project.

As you may know, 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. Initially, it was constructed as a part of the U.S. 90 highway system but was integrated as part of I-10 in the 1960s. The bridge helped ease congestion in the Lake Charles region while allowing ships to pass freely beneath its 135-foot-high span. The growth in the area over the last 70 years has increased traffic demand along I-10 from the east and west interchanges with I-210, including the Calcasieu River Bridge. In 2016, the average daily crossings exceeded 80,000.

This project meets INFRA Grant standards in that it is focused on alleviating serious congestion issues on a highly traveled corridor. Specifically, the interstate segment encompassing the project area experiences a reduction in travel lanes from six to four lanes of traffic, leading to bottlenecks, time delays, and increased safety risks. While at this time the bridge is structurally sound, it lacks modern safety features. This project meets the criteria. If awarded, combined with the State's commitment of \$85 million, the INFRA grant will enable leveraging gap financing through a Private-Public Partnership (P3).

Further, this project is a critical gateway point for industrial construction projects such as Sasol, Cheniere, Sabine Pass LNG, Driftwood LNG, Magnolia LNG, Cameron LNG, and many others. These projects are creating thousands of jobs and generating billions in economic development. This region of Louisiana is quickly becoming a global leader in energy exports, contributing to American energy dominance. In 2020 alone, Southwest Louisiana has completed \$40 billion in industrial projects with another \$60 billion in projects pending. Adding additional lanes would expand the capabilities of the I-10 corridor, which is vital for Southwest Louisiana, Houston, and New Orleans. With strategic investment in Southwest Louisiana's infrastructure needs, we can unlock its full potential, benefiting the entire nation.

While the area was growing exponentially, the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters in 2020 and early 2021 have caused several setbacks. During this period, Hurricanes Laura and Delta devastated the region's economy and infrastructure. Investing in this project would help with Southwest Louisiana's recovery and ensure future economic growth.

The I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge Project is a critical infrastructure priority for the Louisiana delegation. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the State's application. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions regarding our request.

Respectfully,



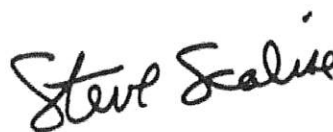
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



Clay Higgins
United States Congressman



Steve Scalise
United States Congressman



Garret Graves
United States Congressman



Mike Johnson
United States Congressman



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