

# United States Congress

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

May 31, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We write to you today in support of the National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program (Mega) 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, the bridge was constructed as part of the U.S. 90 highway system but it 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 the Mega 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 \$300 million, the Mega grant will enable leveraging gap financing through a Public-Private Partnership (P3).

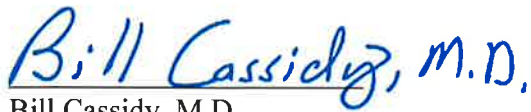
Furthermore, this I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge project is a critical gateway point for industrial construction projects such as Sasol, Cheniere, Sabine Pass LNG, Driftwood LNG, Magnolia LNG, Cameron LNG, and many others. These projects are creating thousands of jobs and generating billions in economic development. In fact, this region of Louisiana has become a global leader in energy exports with the United States agreeing to ramp up LNG exports to the European Union in response to the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine. Providing additional lanes would expand the capabilities of the I-10 corridor, which is vital for residents and businesses in Southwest Louisiana, Houston and New Orleans. With this strategic investment in Southwest Louisiana's infrastructure needs, we can unlock its full potential, benefiting the entire nation.

While this area has been growing exponentially, the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters that occurred 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 the

I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge project would help accelerate Southwest Louisiana's recovery and ensure future economic growth in the region.

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 Mega grant request.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



Mike Johnson  
United States Congressman



Clay Higgins  
United States Congressman



Julia Letlow  
United States Congressman



Troy Carter  
United States Congressman