Date

The Honorable Secretary

Office of the Secretary of Transportation

United States Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE

Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for the FY 2024 PROTECT Discretionary Grant Application – WisDOT’s Raising the I-94 Rock River and Crawfish River Bridges Project

Dear USDOT Secretary,

I strongly support the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s (WisDOT) request for the FY24 PROTECT Grant funding for the Raising the I-94 Rock River and Crawfish River Bridges (Project) between Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin. A grant award would be used toward reconstruction to raise the Interstate 94 (I-94) Rock River and Crawfish River Bridges above the 100-year flood elevation to ensure reliable, safe state and interstate transportation for decades to come.

Highwater levels around the Project area regularly occur which require careful monitoring. The flood of 2008 forced the closure of seven miles of westbound I-94, including bridges over the Rock River and Crawfish River. Accentuating the impact to local and long-distance travelers, the flood throughout the area also led to the closure of most roadways in the area, including alternate routes to I-94, state highways and local roads. The impact of this event and the risks to this transportation network are profound.

WisDOT managed westbound traffic by making eastbound I-94 bidirectional. The four-lane Interstate was reduced to two lanes, and traffic speed was drastically reduced to accommodate the traffic pattern adjustments. The logistics and safety concerns highlight the need to reconstruct the four bridges and elevate the nearby roadways to maintain traffic flow. Providing this infrastructure improvement to the four bridges will ensure a safe and reliable regional transportation network.

The Project is critical for the connectivity of the southern Wisconsin transportation network. I-94, as the main connector between Milwaukee and Madison, serves as a major freight route and is a lifeline for the southern part of Wisconsin. The corridor connects Milwaukee to the Twin Cities, Minnesota, and destinations further west in the U.S. and Canada. This vital artery carries over $16 billion in freight commerce yearly. The importance of this route underscores the significance of raising the I-94 Rock River and Crawfish River Bridges out of the 100-year flood elevation.

The Project also warrants national attention for WisDOT’s willingness to seek efficiencies by engaging a Design-Builder who can perform the required work. They will identify an optimal approach to staging the work.

On behalf of [Organization], I ask that you give every consideration to WisDOT’s application for the Raising the I-94 Rock River and Crawfish River Bridges Project. The Project will [statement of organization-specific benefits/perspective/anecdotes and/or the impact on your organization during the 2008 flood and the closure of I-94].

Thank you for your consideration,

[Name]

[Title]