



NORTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Representative Denton Zubke

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COMMITTEES:

Education
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April 16, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, DC 20590

RE: FY 2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant Program
Billings County Little Missouri River Crossing (LMRC) Safety and Mobility Project

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to strongly request your favorable consideration of the Billings County LMRC BUILD grant request. This project has significant ramifications to Billings County but is also important to the State of North Dakota and to our overall economic outlook moving forward.

Billings County, Medora (the only incorporated community in the County), and the Little Missouri River are in the Little Missouri National Grasslands which, in its entirety, encompasses more than 1 million acres and is the largest grassland in the United States. The area is rich with recreational opportunity, including several campgrounds, the Maah Daah Hey Trail, and the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. As a result, the region draws thousands of outdoor enthusiasts each year eager to hunt, fish, hike, bike and generally enjoy the rich and unique beauty the grasslands have to offer.

The LMRC project is primarily construction of a new bridge over the Little Missouri River between the existing crossings near Medora and the Elkhorn Ranchlands. There is currently substantial distance between these east-west crossings, resulting in residents, ranchers, farmers, and tourists having decreased connectivity throughout this very rural area. This becomes most important if someone needs emergency services (police, fire and/or medical). As previously mentioned, this is a sparsely populated, grassland area, making it difficult, especially at night or in poor weather conditions, to relay location accurately. This forces emergency personnel to make their best guess, sometimes resulting in extended time to arrive as needed and increased safety risk for the caller and for emergency personnel.

The proposed bridge is the most expedient, cost effective and efficient remedy to ensuring a safe and reliable east-west river crossing. It will improve safety, connectivity, state-of-good-repair, and economic opportunity in the region and, in turn, in the state.

BUILD funds are essential to ensuring completion of this much needed project. I appreciate your consideration and thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denton Zubke', written over a horizontal line.

Representative Denton Zubke
North Dakota State Representative