

**MEDORA GRAZING ASSOCIATION**  
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March 24, 2020  
The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Billings County Little Missouri River Crossing (LMRC)

Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Medora Grazing Association, I am writing to support the Billings County application for the FY 2020 BUILD grant program.

The Medora Grazing Association has been operating in Billings County for 83 years. We are a member organization that assists in managing permitted livestock and range resources for the region's ranching and agricultural community on National Grasslands. We encourage more sustainable grazing and conservation practices. Agriculture and ranching are primary economic drivers in North Dakota as a whole and specifically in Billings County and we are at the forefront of addressing the needs and issues that most directly impact our members.

The Little Missouri River Bridge Crossing would absolutely address one of those issues. As you are no doubt aware, currently, there is limited access between the east and west sides of the Little Missouri River. Established, reliable, and safe bridges only currently exist near the community of Medora (I-94) or 70 miles away at the Long X Bridge. Several thousand acres of farm, ranch and grazing lands lie between those two points and the current bridge access requires those business owners to travel significant distances to go around the river for purposes of commerce and/or connectivity to property they might own on both sides of the river. Several of our members own small fords between the established bridges, however, these are not safe or useable all year long. During late winter and spring, the river is often too high and/or fully flooded, resulting in the inability to use those fords for safe crossing. Additionally, emergency personnel are unable to use them consistently, resulting in delayed response times and a potentially significant safety issue outside just the crossing danger.

The proposed project would create a third safe and reliable crossing option just about half-way between the existing bridges. It would allow for increased safety, connectivity and access to commerce and property on both sides of the river for the many ranchers and agricultural producers whose business relies on their ability to utilize a reliable transportation system year-round.

We fully support the Billings County request. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Wes Obrigewitch  
Medora Grazing Association