

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 30, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Energy and Water Development  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Energy and Water Development  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chair Feinstein and Ranking Member Kennedy,

As the Senate Appropriations Committee develops spending priorities for the Fiscal Year 2024 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, we write to request the inclusion of critical funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“Corps”) for Civil Works’ effort to replace the Cape Cod Bridges (“Bridges”). Consistent with President Biden’s budget request, we urge you to appropriate \$350 million for this project.

The Bridges are vital assets for the Cape Cod economy and surrounding communities, and they are in desperate need of replacement. Built in 1935, the Bridges “changed the relationship between the Cape and the rest of Massachusetts.”<sup>1</sup> Today, the Bridges serve as the gateway to Cape Cod for more than 260,000 Cape and Islands residents and more than five million annual visitors. More than 35 million vehicles crossing the canal each year, and the Bridges are the sole access point for vehicular traffic to and from Cape Cod. They serve as essential routes for general transportation, tourism, and evacuations in case of an emergency. However, the Bridges were built when Cape Cod’s population was 26,000 and are nearing 90 years old. As a result, the Bridges are functionally obsolete, require increasingly costly maintenance, and are unable to keep up with modern levels of traffic, resulting in “[l]egendary traffic jams that cost Cape

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<sup>1</sup> Asad Jung, *Sagamore, Bourne bridges have brought prosperity, loyalty and now worries to Cape Cod*, Cape Cod Times (May 27, 2022), <https://www.capecodtimes.com/story/news/2022/05/27/cape-cod-canal-bridges-brought-prosperity-loyalty-worries/9688301002/>.

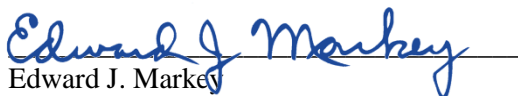
businesses millions of dollars.”<sup>2</sup> Today, the Bridges pose a significant risk to the accessibility, economy, and health of the Cape Cod region. In the case of extreme weather or other emergency situations, we are particularly concerned that the Bridges will become a deadly chokepoint both in the evacuation of residents and visitors and in the distribution of critical medical supplies and food.

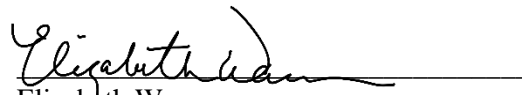
In 2020, the Corps released a Major Rehabilitation Evaluation Report (MRER) that compared the costs of rehabilitating or replacing the Bridges. Based on that report, the rehabilitation would be expensive, lead to lengthy lane, canal, and bridge closures, burden the Corps with future maintenance and rehabilitation costs, and severely restrict access to and from Cape Cod.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the Corps found that new bridges would significantly improve travel conditions, meet modern safety standards for vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and greatly improve multimodal travel.<sup>4</sup> New bridges are key to modernizing Massachusetts’ physical infrastructure to meet the economic, social, and environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. As the Corps compared these options, it rightfully concluded that replacing the Bridges is the most cost-effective solution.<sup>5</sup>

The Cape Cod Bridges are unique federal assets in that they are completely owned and maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers. Replacing the bridges will require a significant investment from the federal government, and as the President indicates in his budget, the time has now come for the Corps to put significant funds towards their replacement. With \$350 million in its fiscal 2024 budget, we can begin to make a critical investment in this essential project. For that reason, we request that the 2024 Energy and Water Appropriations bill fully fund the President’s \$350 million request.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

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<sup>2</sup> See *As Sagamore, Bourne Bridges Age, Cape Looks For A Replacement Plan*, CBS Boston (May 22, 2019), <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/sagamore-bourne-bridges-replacement-cape-cod-traffic/>.

<sup>3</sup> See 2020 MRER, *supra* note 1, at 54-60 (explaining the impact of major rehabilitation of the Bridges).

<sup>4</sup> See *id.* at 94 ((finding that the “advantages of the Bridge Replacements are minimal disturbances to traffic during construction and replacing the aging infrastructure with bridges that meet current engineering standards and regulations. The new bridges will also have far less future repair costs and traffic delays over the project life cycle.”)).

<sup>5</sup> See *id.* at ES-21.