

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2024

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 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, and Ranking Member Kennedy,

As the Senate Appropriations Committee develops spending priorities for the Fiscal Year 2025 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 to design a project for repairs to the Bourne Bridge to extend its life while the Cape Cod Bridges Replacement Project proceeds as planned. In accordance with President Biden’s budget request, we urge you to appropriate \$5 million to enable the Corps to initiate a detailed evaluation and design of a repair project with the goal of avoiding a cost prohibitive major rehabilitation of the Bourne Bridge.

The Bourne and Sagamore Bridges (“Bridges”) traverse the Cape Cod Canal Federal Navigational Project and are owned and maintained by the Corps. The Bridges are vital for the Cape Cod economy and surrounding communities, and they are in desperate need of replacement. 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 cross 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 people, and they 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 businesses millions of dollars.”¹ 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 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. Without a replacement project, the

¹ 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/>.


Bridges were scheduled to undergo their second major rehabilitation in 2025- 2027 (Sagamore) and 2029-2031 (Bourne). However, the MRER determined the major rehabilitation project would 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. The MRER appropriately recommended the most cost-effective option would be to replace both the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges to significantly improve travel conditions, meet modern safety standards for vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and greatly improve multimodal travel.²


In partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is steadfastly moving forward with replacing both the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges. The rigorous “phased approach” developed by the Commonwealth will commence with the replacement of the Sagamore Bridge.³ While the Commonwealth proceeds with the project funding, design and permitting for the new Sagamore Bridge, the Corps seeks to design an interim project to extend the life of the Bourne Bridge beyond the MRER’s estimated deadline for a major rehabilitation project, in order to support progress toward the ultimate goal of replacing the Bourne.

Thank you for your support in securing \$350 million, towards the \$600 million commitment from President Biden, in the Fiscal Year 2024 Energy and Water Appropriations bill for the replacement of the Cape Cod Canal Bridges. This additional \$5 million for the evaluation and design of an interim project on the Bourne Bridge will help advance the Cape Cod Bridges Replacement Project, ultimately transferring ownership of the Bridges to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and ending federal responsibility and financial liability for the Bridges.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

² 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.”)).

³ Boston 25 News, “Healey says ‘phased approach’ needed to secure funding for Cape bridges, starting with Sagamore,” Timothy Nazzaro, August 14, 2023, <https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/barnstable-county/healey-says-phased-approach-needed-secure-funding-cape-bridges-starting-with-sagamore/RIZ6F4K5VVB6RKNHSV7S7NSLUQ/>.