



# Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

August 2, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Letter of Support – Blatnik Bridge Reconstruction Project  
Bridge Investment Program (BIP) Funding Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to express my support for the joint application submitted by the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation for a grant under the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) to help fund the Blatnik Bridge Reconstruction Project.

As one of only two bridges that connects the Twin Ports of Superior, Wisconsin and Duluth, Minnesota, the Blatnik Bridge is a vital pathway for workers, students, healthcare providers, patients, tourists, business owners, and their customers to access jobs, commerce, healthcare facilities, and other destinations in both my state and the state of Minnesota. Apart from the thousands of folks who cross it by car, the Blatnik Bridge is also essential to the success of our nation's shipping industry, as the Port of Duluth-Superior is the largest U.S. port by tonnage on the Great Lakes and in the top twenty largest ports in the country. The port is also one of the largest marine gateways for U.S. trade with Canada, Wisconsin's number-one trade partner.

On average, more than 30,000 cars travel across the bridge each day, and as such, it requires frequent repair projects and annual inspections. The Blatnik Bridge Reconstruction Project aims to completely replace or rehabilitate the bridge's structural elements in order to restore it to good structural condition, enhance climate and weather resilience, redesign the bridge span and the Wisconsin approach to improve safety and efficiency, and add bicycle and pedestrian facilities to support non-vehicle mobility and recreation.

This project is consistent with the BIP's goals and grant criteria as the proposed investments will greatly improve safety and mobility on the Blatnik Bridge and improve access to and from regional commercial centers and business hubs—including the downtowns of Superior and Duluth and the Port of Duluth-Superior. These improvements will not only foster regional economic growth but also bolster national supply chains and strengthen the reliability of the transportation network that serves hundreds of communities across northern Wisconsin and Minnesota. The initiatives within this grant application reflect my commitment to investing in and improving our state's roads and infrastructure in order to create stronger, more inclusive, and well-connected communities—a goal I know we both share. This has been a top priority for me and my

administration, and since 2019, I am proud that we have made some of the most significant investments in our transportation system in decades, improving more than 4,600 miles of highways and roads, including more than 1,700 miles of locally owned roads, and repairing nearly 1,500 bridges across the state. However, after years of neglect by Wisconsin's previous leadership, we still have much work to do, and that is among the many reasons I support this application so we can continue to build upon our work to ensure safe and reliable connections across our communities.

I am grateful for continued opportunities to collaborate in the pursuit of our shared goal to repair, improve, and build infrastructure across Wisconsin and our country, and I very much appreciate your consideration and approval of this application.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers  
Governor