April 28, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

We are writing to express our support for the application submitted by the North Dakota Department of Transportation's (NDDOT) on behalf of its Improving Resiliency of Rural North Dakota Roads project for 2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Rural roads in northern, central, and eastern North Dakota are built within the "Prairie Pothole Region," an area of widespread, shallow depressions covering two thirds of the state. Many of these prairie potholes are closed basins, and as our state has experienced a wet cycle since the early 1990s, water levels have continued to rise, with some potholes flooding to form larger lakes and sloughs.

As a result, roads in this region, many of which are rural two-lane highways, become flooded. This leads to unavoidable delays and the rerouting of traffic over great distances, reducing efficiency and increasing costs. If awarded, NDDOT would raise affected road grades to improve the resiliency of the system, helping to ensure the safe, cost-effective, and reliable transportation of both people and goods.

This effort is a prime example of projects the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (R.O.U.T.E.S.) initiative is working to address and support. The project is located entirely within rural areas and assistance will ensure our state can continue to produce and deliver the food and energy our nation needs. Accordingly, we hope the NDDOT's application receives your favorable consideration. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please keep us informed of the review process, and feel free to contact us with any updates or inquiries you may have.

Sincerely,

John Hoeven
U.S. Senator

Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator

Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress