

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 5, 2019

Brandye Hendrickson  
Acting Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Hendrickson:

We write to urge the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to immediately release the \$475 million in funding for risk-based bridge repair and replacement that we worked to secure in the recently passed Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations bill (Pub.L.116-6). The increased FHWA bridge funding provided by Congress is specifically reserved for states around the country with the highest bridge repair and replacement needs. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Illinois has the fifth highest number of structurally deficient bridges in the nation. This much-needed funding will play a vital role in helping states like Illinois improve their bridge maintenance backlog and ensuring that our nation's bridges remain safe for the traveling public.

Illinois currently has the third largest bridge inventory in the country. Of the 26,775 bridges in Illinois, 2,303 bridges, or 8.6 percent, are classified as structurally deficient. Each day, there are an average of nine million trips across Illinois' structurally deficient bridges. And while the percentage of structurally deficient bridges in Illinois has remained steady, the rate of improvement has stalled, falling below the national improvement rate over the past four years. That's because bridge repairs are expensive. Illinois has identified needed repairs on 2,642 bridges in the state, which the state estimates will cost nearly \$10 billion. Increased investment at both the state and federal level is badly needed to confront this challenge, which is why we pushed to include nearly half a billion dollars for risk-based bridge repair in this year's appropriations bill.

While the majority of the federal funding used by states for bridge repair comes out of the same federal highway formula funds that states receive from the Highway Trust Fund to pay for road repairs, this \$475 million in funding is unique in that these are general funds specifically allocated only for bridge repair and replacement and only for states that have the highest percentages of structurally deficient bridges. Congress allocated the funding this way to ensure it gets to states like Illinois who need it the most.

Each day that FHWA waits to release this new funding is another day that the state of Illinois must wait to address some of its pressing bridge repair issues. We urge the FHWA to work quickly to advance these funds to the state as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator