

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

November 19, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write to express our strong support for the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the US 50 Blue Mesa Bridges Emergency Repair Project (“The Project”). The CDOT requests federal funding from the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) to perform emergency repairs on bridges K-07-A and K-07-B on US Highway 50 (US 50) that are vital to connect communities in rural, mountainous Southwest Colorado.

In April 2024, during a planned inspection of the bridge, CDOT identified a significant crack in the high-strength steel support structure. CDOT coordinated with FHWA and immediately closed the route to formally investigate the structural damage.

As a result of the closures, the rural communities living on either side of the Blue Mesa Reservoir were cut off from essential daily destinations. The original official detour route added nearly six hours to a commute that normally takes just over an hour and communities along the detour roads experienced a disruptive increase in traffic. To restore access as quickly as possible, CDOT performed around-the-clock examinations and repairs to Bridge K-07-B. The second bridge, K-07-A, is made of the same material and requires similar repairs.

Due to the urgency of the situation for the affected communities, CDOT commenced this work without delay and pursued a Letter of No Prejudice (LNP) to receive retroactive grant funding. We appreciate the U.S. Department of Transportation’s approval of the LNP that allowed for the unique scope of the Project to include both past and future work on the bridges.

The need for these repairs are critical to the mountain communities that rely on transportation reliability to access necessities. During the closures, those who use these bridges to commute to work, take their children to and from school, and access medical care were without a direct highway route.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to identify and deploy all available DOT resources to tackle the challenge. We look forward to discussing this issue further with you and members of your team.

Sincerely,

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator