



**RAPID CITY AREA
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

*300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57702
605-394-4120*

February 20, 2025

Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary,

I am writing to express our full support for the South Dakota Department of Transportation's (SDDOT) submission for a FY 2025 Grant application. The proposed project, the Hwy 44 Bridge Replacement and Resiliency Project, is crucial for enhancing the safety and resilience of our rural infrastructure in South Dakota. The project is located just west of Rapid City, SD, approximately 4 miles west of State Highway 231.

The project's primary focus is to raise and reconstruct two bridges on Hwy 44 that have reached the end of their useful life. These structures can no longer safely withstand the increasingly extreme weather events that our region now faces. This initiative is not only timely but essential for the safety of our community and the countless visitors who use this route. Hwy 44 serves as a main east-west route for accessing parks, resorts, and various tourist attractions in the Black Hills Area. The importance of this highway to our local economy and tourism industry cannot be overstated.

The comprehensive project will include approach grading for the new structures, installation of guardrails, surfacing improvements, new pavement markings, implementation of erosion control measures, and construction of a new ADA compliant pedestrian facilities. These improvements will significantly enhance the safety and functionality of this vital transportation corridor.

Furthermore, the project goes beyond immediate repairs by incorporating surface transportation construction to ensure long-term roadway resiliency. This forward-thinking approach will protect our infrastructure against future challenges and minimize the need for frequent repairs or replacements.

The total estimated cost of this project is \$16.7 million. SDDOT anticipates requesting \$13.36 million in grant funds. SDDOT will be providing a \$3.34 million match from State Highway

Funds, of which are already included in the SDDOT STIP. The estimated date of completion for the project is Fall of 2027.

The Hwy 44 Bridge Replacement and Resiliency Project promises to substantially improve both local and regional transportation network resiliency. It exemplifies regional significance in all aspects, from enhancing public safety to supporting economic growth and environmental sustainability. It demonstrates a proactive approach to infrastructure improvement that will benefit our community for generations to come. We urge you to give SDDOT's application your utmost consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Mayor Larry Larson, Chairperson
Executive Policy Committee