

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Interim Chair
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Interim Chair Murray and Ranking Member Kennedy,

As the Senate Appropriations Committee finalizes the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you to preserve the \$350 million in federal funding for the Cape Cod Canal Bridges. This critical funding, originally secured in the Senate's FY24 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, matches President Biden's request in his FY24 budget for an initial \$350 million toward a total commitment of \$600 million for the bridge replacements.¹

The Bourne and Sagamore Bridges are not just vital arteries for the Cape Cod economy and surrounding communities, they are also essential routes for general transportation, tourism, and emergency evacuations. Built in 1933 and owned by the federal government,² the Bourne and the Sagamore Bridges are the sole gateway to Cape Cod for over 35 million vehicles annually, serving as the main access point for more than 260,000 residents and over 5 million visitors.³ The bridges are invaluable, yet at more than 90 years old, both bridges are functionally obsolete due to structural deficiencies that present an ongoing risk to the accessibility and economic stability of the Cape Cod region. For that reason, the replacement of the Cape Cod Bridges is key to modernizing Massachusetts' physical infrastructure to meet the economic, social, and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

¹ The White House Office of Management and Budget, "Budget of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year 2024," p. 119, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/budget_fy2024.pdf; Boston Globe, "Biden budget includes some funding for Cape Cod bridges — but a long path awaits in Congress," Emma Platoff, March 9, 2023, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/03/09/nation/biden-budget-includes-some-funding-cape-cod-bridges-long-path-awaits-congress/>; Boston.com, "Here's what Biden's proposed budget would mean for the replacement of the Cape bridges," Christopher Gavin, March 10, 2023, <https://www.boston.com/news/politics/2023/03/10/biden-budget-cape-cod-bridges/>.

² US Army Corps of Engineers New England District Website, "Cape Cod Canal History," <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Cape-Cod-Canal/History/>.

³ Cape Cod Times, "Sagamore, Bourne bridges have brought prosperity, loyalty and now worries to Cape Cod," Asad Jung, May 27, 2022, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/story/news/2022/05/27/cape-cod-canal-bridges-brought-prosperity-loyalty-worries/9688301002/>; WGBH, "Federal funding for Cape Cod bridges project denied a second time," Bob Seay, January 5, 2023, <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2023-01-05/federal-funding-for-cape-cod-bridges-project-denied-a-second-time>; Letter from Barnstable County Board of Regional Commissioners to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 6, 2023, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/download/letter-from-barnstable-county-board-of-regional-commissioners-9623>.

Fortunately, after years of work by our offices, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and other stakeholders, the replacement project is beginning to take shape. In December 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded a \$372 million Mega grant for this project, the first significant federal funding for the Cape Cod Bridges project. Before that, in December 2022, the Biden Administration awarded the USACE a \$1.6 million planning grant for the bridges project, signaling the Administration's strong commitment to this critical infrastructure need.⁴ The Biden Administration also included a \$350 million down payment toward a \$600 million allocation in the President's fiscal year 2024 budget for the USACE, a critical step forward in demonstrating the Administration's commitment to the project.⁵ The project will ultimately result in "new bridges that vastly improve travel conditions, meet modern safety standards for vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and provide significantly improved multimodal travel."⁶

Given the bridges' vital positions as "passageways to the rest of the world, and an integral part of the economy,"⁷ securing the \$350 million in the FY24 Appropriations bill to replace them is essential. In July 2023, letters were sent to 36 Cape Cod community stakeholders, including state elected officials, local elected officials, Tribal leaders, and community organizations, seeking their input on how the aging Bourne and Sagamore Bridges are impacting communities, businesses, and residents on and around Cape Cod.⁸ Their responses highlighted the impact of current bridge repair closures, and future impacts if the bridges are not replaced. Deputy Director of the Cape Cod Commission Steven Tupper warned that "residents, visitors and local officials can count on more intensive traffic impacts if the replacement project doesn't come to pass...[and that] continued maintenance of the existing bridges would lead to intense cycles of ongoing repair work, some on the order of three to five years in length."⁹ Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce CEO Paul Niedzwiecki said that the bridges "affect every single part of the Cape's economy," and that "the Bourne and Sagamore bridges provide the economic

⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation, "Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$2.1 Billion to Improve Four Nationally Significant Bridges Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's First Large Bridge Grants," press release, January 4, 2023, <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/biden-harris-administration-announces-21-billion-improve-four-nationally-significant>.

⁵ The White House Office of Management and Budget, "Budget of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year 2024," p. 119, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/budget_fy2024.pdf; Boston Globe, "Biden budget includes some funding for Cape Cod bridges — but a long path awaits in Congress," Emma Platoff, March 9, 2023, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/03/09/nation/biden-budget-includes-some-funding-cape-cod-bridges-long-path-awaits-congress/>; Boston.com, "Here's what Biden's proposed budget would mean for the replacement of the Cape bridges," Christopher Gavin, March 10, 2023, <https://www.boston.com/news/politics/2023/03/10/biden-budget-cape-cod-bridges/>.

⁶ Letter from State Senator Susan L. Moran to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 6, 2023, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/download/letter-from-state-senator-susan-l-moran-9623>.

⁷ Cape Cod Times, "Sagamore, Bourne bridges have brought prosperity, loyalty and now worries to Cape Cod," Asad Jung, May 27, 2022, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/story/news/2022/05/27/cape-cod-canal-bridges-brought-prosperity-loyalty-worries/9688301002/>.

⁸ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "Warren Requests Information on Impacts of Current and Future State of Bourne and Sagamore Bridges from Cape Cod Stakeholders," press release, July 21, 2023, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/oversight/letters/warren-requests-information-on-impacts-of-current-and-future-state-of-bourne-and-sagamore-bridges-from-cape-cod-stakeholders>.

⁹ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "New Congressional Report Elevates Urgent Calls of Community Leaders to Replace Cape Cod Bridges," report, October 17, 2023, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/new-congressional-report-elevates-urgent-calls-of-community-leaders-to-replace-cape-cod-bridges>.

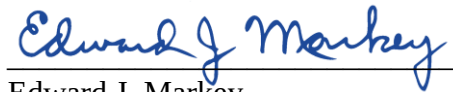
link between Cape Cod and [the] rest of the Commonwealth...the reliability of the bridges directly impacts the long-term viability of [the] region's economy and the ability of local businesses to survive and thrive.”¹⁰

The economic vitality and quality of life for Cape Cod's residents, workers, and visitors are deeply reliant on the replacement of these bridges. We therefore urge the Senate Appropriations Committee to maintain the crucial \$350 million allocation for the Cape Cod Bridges project in the final FY24 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. This decisive action will ensure both ongoing access and lasting economic security for the Cape Cod community.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

¹⁰ *Id.*