

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2024

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write to express our support for the application submitted by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) for the Department of Transportation's FFY 2025-2026 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Opportunity. If awarded, the MBTA will use these funds for the North Station Renovation and Draw 1 Bridge Replacement Project, the most critical funding priority for the MBTA and most vital transportation asset to the MBTA's north-side operations.

Draw 1, which spans the Charles River in eastern Massachusetts, is a Depression-era drawbridge well beyond its useful life. It carries both intercity passenger rail service (Amtrak Downeaster) and regional rail service (MBTA Commuter Rail) into and out of downtown Boston via North Station, the fifth-largest transit station in New England and a multimodal hub for over 75,000 passengers per day. Draw 1's need for significant structural maintenance and repair, as well as necessitated repairs to its associated track, signaling, and control tower, has led to delays that affect more than a thousand passenger trains each week, from local routes to service as far as Brunswick, Maine.

This project includes several components: full replacement of the Draw 1 movable bridge structures and the north and south trestle approach structures; replacement of the drawbridge's control tower; completion of track improvements throughout the project area; and the installation of temporary and permanent signal systems, communication systems, and additional switches to accommodate track relocations north of the drawbridge.

These crucial upgrades will provide a multitude of transportation benefits that will impact the entire region: it will support anticipated increased ridership along the Amtrak Downeaster route; improve operations for local freight trains that service the supplier Boston Sand and Gravel; increase resiliency by moving critical mechanical drawbridge components above projected future flood levels; improve working conditions for MBTA and Keolis (regional rail) employees by eliminating asbestos and lead paint in the drawbridge's control tower; and lay the groundwork for future regional rail electrification. This project will also reduce a known bottleneck and improve operations by increasing the drawbridge's capacity from four to six tracks and extending and activating North Station's Platform F, resulting in two additional tracks at this transportation hub.

Draw 1 is Amtrak's only access to North Station and the City of Boston. Without this asset, service would terminate in Woburn, MA, 12 miles north of the city by car. Bridge failure, which is becoming increasingly possible, would not only impact Amtrak's Downeaster IPR service but also four regional rail lines: Fitchburg, Haverhill, Lowell, and Newburyport/Rockport. The MBTA transit system will not support the failure of this bridge: heavy rail and bus service in the project area do not have the capacity to support mode transfers for the 10.67M+ passengers per year who will be impacted by bridge failure. This project is the most urgent and integral funding priority for the MBTA and essential to our constituents, especially those who are transit-dependent.

We thank you in advance for your fair and full consideration of the Institute's application. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



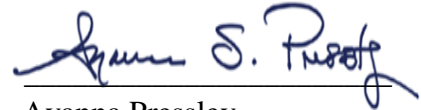
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



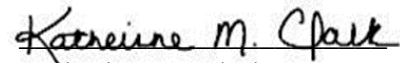
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



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