

Joint Maine/New Hampshire Statement on Stimulus Funding for Memorial Bridge

Date: 05/01/09

Maine-New Hampshire Joint Statement on Stimulus

Funding: April 27, 2009

Maine and NH DOTs both agree that pursuing federal stimulus discretionary grant funding could be a near-term solution for the significant funding needed for the bridges between Kittery and Portsmouth (Memorial Bridge carrying US Route 1 traffic and Sarah Mildred Long Bridge carrying US 1 Bypass traffic) over the Piscataqua River.

Guidance from the US Department of Transportation on Projects of National Significance will be available by May 17th per the rules of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This information will help determine the best method to approach the application, which is due by November 2009. Funds would be awarded by February 2010 per the legislation.

New Hampshire, through its Ten-Year Improvement Plan process that is developed through the Governor and Executive Council and approved by the Legislature, has identified the Memorial Bridge as their highest priority in terms of infrastructure rehabilitation or replacement.

In Maine, there are other competing priorities, and these will need to be considered before MaineDOT can commit to any individual project that may be eligible for this funding. Maine and NH DOTs are working closely together at the highest level to develop a coordinated bi-state approach to addressing these bridge needs.

Area residents who feel strongly about this decision should continue to make their wishes known to state and federal government officials. The discretionary grant is limited at \$1.5 billion nationally and will be

extremely competitive, with grant applications coming from all parts of the country. There will be many more requests for funding than the \$1.5 billion available. New Hampshire and Maine cannot and should not count on this funding source regardless of how strong the grant application is perceived to be.

Items required under the early portion of the Connection Study will also support the discretionary grant process, such as:

- Public Involvement to identify area needs and problems
- Traffic Modeling that includes all modes of transportation (i.e. pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, trucks and marine traffic)
- Historic Documentation of the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge
- Detailed Inspection of both the Memorial Bridge and Sarah Mildred Long Bridge

Therefore, it is prudent to commence with the Connection Study to determine the long-term needs of the two communities and the best option to address transportation needs.