



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

April 22, 2015

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chairman  
Environment and Public Works  
205 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Ranking Member  
Environment and Public Works  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Boxer:

As the Committee on Environment and Public Works continues to craft a MAP-21 reauthorization bill, I urge you to ensure adequate funding for all bridges on Federal-aid highways. Changes under MAP-21 to eliminate the Highway Bridge Program in favor of performance-based funding were well-intentioned but have unfortunately left one category of bridges—locally-owned bridges that are on the Federal Aid Highway system—without a dedicated funding source.

As you know, bridges are a unique component of our nation's transportation system. Unlike a variety of road and pavement projects, many bridge projects entail complex design processes, necessitate long-term planning and procurement, and present unique construction challenges. Moreover, there is little room for error when it comes to bridge safety, as they must remain structurally sound in order to ensure that vehicles and motorists are secure.

Prior to MAP-21, all bridges were eligible for funding under the Highway Bridge Program. The 2012 Act eliminated the program, however, and shifted a majority of its funding to the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP). As a result, just 23 percent of the nation's bridges are eligible for assistance under the NHPP, as the program only supports bridge projects that are a part of the National Highway System. The remaining 77 percent of the nation's bridges, which includes both on- and off-system bridges that are owned by local



agencies, must rely on funding from the Surface Transportation Program (STP). Notably, STP receives less than half of the funding allocation of the NHPP, meaning local bridge projects must compete with other eligible projects for very limited funding.

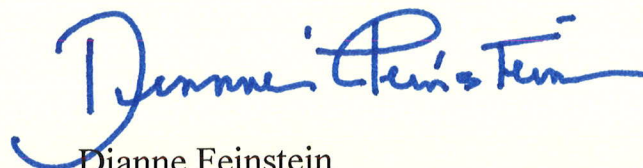
In California, nearly 28 percent of local bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, meaning these structures are in poor condition due to deterioration and damage or were built to standards that are not used today. In some counties, the percentage of local bridges that are in need of rehabilitation or replacement exceeds 50 percent. It is in the national interest to resolve this backlog and maintain these bridges in a state of good repair moving forward. While the State of California and its local governments have placed an emphasis on financing these projects, there is an estimated shortfall of \$1.3 billion to maintain the safety and integrity of the bridge infrastructure.

Moreover, over half of California's local bridges are located on Federal-aid highways. Unlike off-system bridges, which receive a special funding set-aside under MAP-21, on-system bridges do not have a dedicated federal funding source. These projects, therefore, must compete for limited dollars, meaning many essential on-system bridge projects are left shortchanged.

I encourage the Committee to find a solution for this disparity, either by setting aside funding for locally-owned on-system bridges, as has been done for off-system bridges, or better yet by significantly increasing the funding made available through the Surface Transportation Program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other important issues as the Committee considers options for a new transportation bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dianne" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator