Appendix B
Letters of Support
August 19, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of Norfolk Southern Railway to urge you to support the application submitted by New York State for funding for the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on NS, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Pan Am Southern, ten short line railroads, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the many customers we serve. The Portageville Bridge is the critical link for New York’s Southern Tier Corridor, offering efficient, competitive freight rail service. Constructing a modern, new bridge capable of handling today’s industry-standard 286,000 pound railcars and allowing freight trains to travel 35 mph will benefit not only those industries along the Southern Tier, but industries and shippers throughout New York State and the nation’s freight rail network.

Since NS acquired the Southern Tier segment from Conrail in 1999, we have made numerous improvements on this Corridor, including bridge replacements, rail yard improvements, and track upgrades in order to bring the railroad line between Buffalo and Binghamton up to a state of good repair. Yet the Portageville Bridge is the weak link that nevertheless holds this Corridor together. As the State’s application points out, the bridge is structurally deficient and operationally obsolete, and is quickly approaching the end of its useful design life as a rail freight carrying structure. If the bridge closes, NS does have alternatives, but they only slightly mitigate the harm. Should this vital but weak link break, the Southern Tier Corridor will be severed in half. The resulting circuitous alternatives would compromise freight rail’s competitive advantages, markedly increasing shipping costs and the time it would take to move goods along the supply chain. During these last ten years, we have worked with New York to develop a public-private partnership to replace this bridge, with New York State contributing $3.5 million toward preliminary engineering for this project, while NS has made significant expenditures in repairing the bridge, as recently as September 2009.
The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends the reach of the ten shortlines of the Empire Link as well as those of their customers into national and international markets.

As the other railroads supporting this application make plain, construction of a new bridge will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit current customers and encourage economic development in a region that has suffered since long before the current nation-wide economic difficulties. For its part, the PANYNJ made clear its view that the new bridge will create new opportunities to grow intermodal rail container business for exports and imports through its port. So strong is our commitment to maintaining the Southern Tier Corridor intact that NS, in partnership with Canadian Pacific Railway, will provide 50% of the cost of construction for the new bridge, estimated at a cost of $35 million.

NS is proud to join the Canadian Pacific Railway, eight shortline railroads, the PANYNJ, and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations between Buffalo and Binghamton to support the New York State application for the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application and assure you that NS will fulfill its obligation should the application receive a grant award.

Sincerely,

C.W. nominal
The Honorable Raymond LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Sir:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wish to take the opportunity on behalf of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company (CPRC) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project.

From its inception 129 years ago, CPRC has developed into a fully integrated and technologically advanced Class I railway providing rail and intermodal freight transportation services over a 15,400 mile network serving the principal business centers of Canada, from Montreal, Quebec to Vancouver, British Columbia, and the US Midwest and Northeast regions. Our railway feeds directly into the US heartland from the East and West coasts. Agreements with other rail carriers extend our market reach east of Montreal in Canada, throughout the US and into Mexico. Through our subsidiaries, we transport bulk commodities, merchandise freight and intermodal traffic.

The CPRC uses the Southern Tier Corridor between the Canada/Midwest United States and Binghamton, NY via a haulage rights agreement with Norfolk Southern. Approximately 25 percent of the current rail traffic over the Portageville Bridge originates on CPRC. Although CPRC has an alternate route via Montreal to reach Binghamton, the Southern Tier provides the most direct rail and efficient route for CPRC and its customers between certain points in Canada/Buffalo to Binghamton and eastern Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia. The route through Montreal is a more circuitous and less-direct route. The effect of any long-term closure of the Portageville Bridge and the severing of the Southern Tier Corridor could result in higher costs and less efficient routings for many of the customers who depend on their products moving over the bridge.

Like NS and the shortlines that depend upon the Southern Tier, CPRC is hampered by the Bridge’s inability to handle traffic from Buffalo to Binghamton that is loaded to the rail industry’s 286,000-pound standard because the current bridge has a 273,000-pound weight limitation.

Additionally, the project will play an important role in strengthening the cross-border trade between Canada and the United States. An intact Southern Tier Corridor offers the best opportunity to expand the amount of cross-border traffic moved by rail, delivering even more freight more efficiently between the U.S. East Coast and points on the CPRC.
Under our haulage agreement with Norfolk Southern, CPRC will provide a portion of the project’s cost-share based upon its proportionate use of the bridge. So important is the Southern Tier to our long-term strategic and operating plan that CPRC is willing to fulfill that obligation should the application for funding be approved.

Appreciably, construction of a new bridge will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit current and encourage new rail shipping customers.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

Sincerely,

Dave Craig  
AVP Network Strategy Development  
Canadian Pacific Railway
July 16, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood,

I am pleased to offer the support of the Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development to the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project’s TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York.

The Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life. If this bridge is abandoned there would be significant adverse impacts to transportation and economic development on a regional scale.

The bridge is part of only two east-west rail corridors within New York State connecting Buffalo and points west, like Chicago, with Binghamton, the New York metropolitan region, Albany and the New England region. The Portageville Bridge is a critical part of more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and New York State’s rail network. Hundreds of New York businesses rely upon this efficient and economical freight rail service to be globally competitive.

A new bridge must be in place to avoid significant freight rail disruptions. The alternative is circuitous routing, longer transit times, and costlier movements resulting. In addition, a replacement bridge would eliminate speed and weight restrictions which have in the past limited the growth of freight rail opportunities.

This investment by USDOT leverages an earlier $3 million financial contribution from the State and a significant commitment to cover half of the project’s total cost by two Class I railroads. A modern Portageville Bridge will ensure that New York State’s freight rail network along the Southern Tier remains robust for years to come.

Sincerely,

Frank Evangelisti
Commissioner
August 17, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of the B&H Corporation (formerly the Bath & Hammondsport Railroad, below referred to as BHC) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on the BHC and many of the customers we serve.

The BHC operates track in New York between Painted Post and Wayland, NY. At Painted Post, NY, we interchange with the Norfolk Southern for shipments to and from our customers. It is our only, and therefore absolutely critical, junction to the national rail network. Nearly all of BHC’s traffic comes over the Portageville Bridge. Our customers depend upon efficient and low cost transportation for products such as heating fuels, gasoline and ethanol additives, fertilizers, deicing liquids and transit cars for reconstruction. As important, BHC is poised to begin handling large volumes of frac sand, pipe and other materials related to Marcellus Shale energy production activities.

BHC capital upgrades provide the potential for handling railcars loaded at 286,000 lbs. gross weight on rail. However, BHC customers are unable to take advantage of this efficiency due to weight restrictions involving the Portageville Bridge. The construction of a new bridge will increase the weight capacity of the railcars we are able to ship across it, thereby increasing our fuel efficiency and making rail freight even more competitive versus less fuel-efficient trucks.

The effect of any long-term closure of the Portageville Bridge and the severing of the Southern Tier could result in higher costs and less efficient routings for many of the customers who depend on their products moving over the bridge. Indeed, we fear that a significant percentage of that traffic would migrate to the highway. Because we are a
small rail carrier, any loss of carloads and revenues, could hurt our ability to remain viable and competitive.

The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends BHC’s reach and those of our customers into national and international markets. Appreciably, construction of a new bridge with 286,000 lbs. capacity will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit current and encourage new rail shipping customers. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for BHC cannot be stressed enough.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

With kind regards,

[Signature]

Carl P. Belke
Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

~Safety and Service~
June 21, 2010

Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We appreciate the opportunity to express our wholehearted endorsement of the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project’s TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York.

Located within the 14,350-acre Letchworth State Park in upstate New York, the 19th century iron and steel Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life, with transportation and economic development implications which extend well beyond the park’s boundaries.

The Portageville Bridge is a vital yet weak freight rail link along the Southern Tier Route, one of only two east-west rail corridors within New York State connecting Buffalo and other points west, like Chicago, with Binghamton, Albany, the New York City metropolitan region, and New England. This bridge serves an incredibly important role for more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and New York State’s entire rail network. Benefitting daily from this railroad are hundreds of New York businesses which rely upon it for efficient and economical freight rail service, enabling them to remain globally competitive.

As the existing bridge draws closer to its permanent closure, a newly constructed bridge must be in place to avoid harmful freight rail service disruptions. Significantly more circuitous routing, longer transit times, and costlier movements resulting from such disruptions will only place greater strain on other transportation assets and put New York businesses at a competitive disadvantage.
Conversely, however, a modern, new bridge, as proposed in the TIGER II application, would not only ensure the efficient transportation of freight through the Southern Tier for decades to come, but more importantly, it would eliminate the speed and weight restrictions which have in the past greatly limited freight rail growth opportunities.

This targeted investment by the U.S. Department of Transportation, which co-leverages an earlier $3 million financial contribution from New York State as well as a significant commitment by two Class I railroads to cover half of the project's total costs, will ensure New York State's freight rail network along the Southern Tier remains robust for years to come.

New York State has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting and expanding the role of our rail network in transporting freight. The Portageville Bridge Replacement Project is a central feature in realizing our goals. We look forward to working with you to ensure this project's completion.

Sincerely,

Catharine M. Young
Senator, 57th District

Dale M. Volker
Senator, 59th District

Charles J. Buschillo Jr.
Senator, 37th District
Ranking Member, Senate Transportation Committee
The Honorable Raymond LaHood, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Aye, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I'm writing to express my wholehearted endorsement of the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project's TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York.

Located within the 14,350-acre Letchworth State Park in upstate New York, the 19th century iron and steel Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life, with transportation and economic development implications which extend well beyond the Park's boundaries.

A vital yet weak freight rail link along the Southern Tier Route is one of only two east-west rail corridors within New York State connecting Buffalo and points west, like Chicago, with Binghamton, the New York metropolitan region, Albany and the New England region - the Portageville Bridge serves an incredibly important role for more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and indeed, New York State's rail network. Benefiting daily are hundreds of New York businesses which rely upon efficient and economical freight rail service to remain globally competitive.

A new bridge, as proposed in the TIGER II application, would not only ensure that existing freight along the Southern Tier would continue to be routed over it for decades to come, but more importantly, would eliminate speed and weight restrictions which have limited freight rail growth opportunities.

This targeted investment by USDOT, which co-leverages and earlier $3 million financial contribution from the State and a significant commitment to cover half of the project's total cost by two Class I railroads, will ensure New York State's freight rail network along the Southern Tier remains robust for years to come.

Your thoughtful consideration of this critical application and need is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Martin Malave Dilan, Chairman
New York State Senate Transportation Committee
August 5, 2010

The Honorable Raymond LaHood
Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey supports the New York State sponsored TIGER II application for funds to replace the Portageville Bridge, a rail bridge located within the Town of Genesee Falls (Wyoming County) and the Town of Portage (Livingston County).

An efficient freight transportation system, which allows the region’s businesses and customers to balance their cost, speed and reliability needs, is of critical importance if goods movement is to remain an economic stimulant for the region, rather than becoming an economic drag. The project to replace the over 100-year-old Portageville Bridge makes a direct freight rail route between the New York metropolitan area and Buffalo, New York, a more efficient and attractive link to shippers in upstate New York, the industrial Midwest and Eastern Canada. This route, known as the Southern Tier Route, is an important double-stack connection to for the New York metropolitan area -- and the bridge replacement will create new opportunities to grow intermodal rail container business for exports and imports through the port. The Southern Tier Route also serves an integral role for the New York metropolitan region, bringing raw materials, intermediate goods, and finished products ranging from pulp and lumber to plastics and industrial machinery to and from the region.

The Port Authority is committed to the safe, efficient and effective movement of cargo along key goods movement corridors. In the past ten years, the agency has invested over $600 million to create and expand an on-dock rail system, ExpressRail, at its marine terminal facilities in New Jersey and New York. This system, which moved over 300,000 containers in 2009, helps to take trucks off the road and alleviate congestion on the local and regional roadways.

A new modern Portageville Bridge would strengthen the Southern Tier’s link to the region and sustain its role as a key goods movement corridor. It adds to the benefits that the Southern Tier Route historically has delivered to the region’s economy, and complements the Port Authority’s campaign to expand freight rail service opportunities. For these reasons, the agency fully supports the Portageville Replacement Project’s TIGER II application.
Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

Christopher O. Ward
Executive Director
June 15, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood,

I appreciate the opportunity to express my wholehearted endorsement of the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project's TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York.

Located within the 14,350-acre Letchworth State Park in upstate New York, the 19th century iron and steel Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life, with transportation and economic development implications which extend well beyond the Park's boundaries.

A vital yet weak freight rail link along the Southern Tier Route – one of only two east-west rail corridors within New York State connecting Buffalo and points west, like Chicago, with Binghamton, the New York metropolitan region, Albany and the New England region – the Portageville Bridge serves an incredibly important role for more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and indeed, New York State's rail network. Benefiting daily are hundreds of New York businesses which rely upon efficient and economical freight rail service to remain globally competitive.

As the existing bridge draws closer to its permanent closure, a newly constructed bridge must be in place to avoid significant freight rail disruptions. Markedly more circuitous routing, longer transit times, and costlier movements resulting from such disruptions will only place greater strain on other transportation assets and will put New York businesses at a competitive disadvantage.
Conversely, however, a modern, new bridge, as proposed in the TIGER II application, would not only ensure that existing freight along the Southern Tier would continue to be routed over it for decades to come, but more importantly, would eliminate speed and weight restrictions which have in the past limited freight rail growth opportunities.

This targeted investment by USDOT, which co-leverages an earlier $3 million financial contribution from the State and a significant commitment to cover half of the project's total cost by two Class I railroads, will ensure New York State's freight rail network along the Southern Tier remains robust for years to come.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Donna A. Lupardo
Member of Assembly
7 August 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad (WNYP) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portage Bridge Project.

The WNYP connects with Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific (via NS haulage) at Hornell, NY, a station on the NS Southern Tier Line east of the Portage Bridge. While we have other interchange points with NS (Meadville and Driftwood, PA), Hornell is the most important. Its loss would call into question our viability. Frankly, uncertainty about the status of the NS’s ancient iron bridge across the Genesee River at Portageville keeps me awake at night.

We are already hampered by the NS inability to handle traffic from Buffalo to Hornell that is loaded to the rail industry’s 286,000-pound standard because the Portage Bridge has a 273,000-pound weight limitation. WNYP car loadings are showing substantial increases due to drilling activity in the Marcellus Shale Gas Field. Customers receiving frac sand, pipe and other drilling supplies are impacted by the weight limitation.

While the Portage Bridge is a testament to the craftsmanship and engineering skills of 19th Century railroaders – it is nearing the end of its life. Catastrophic closure would sever our railroad lifeline. To reach the WNYP in that event would entail NS would backhauling traffic and using roundabout routings with higher costs and unacceptable delays. Indeed, I fear that a significant percentage of our traffic would migrate to the highway. Because we are a small rail carrier, any loss of traffic hurts our ability to stay in business and grow. That’s why I lose sleep over the problem.

Appreciably, construction of a new bridge with 286,000-pound capacity will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development that will benefit current and encourage new rail shipping customers. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for WNYP and the communities we serve cannot be stressed enough.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

Sincerely yours,

Eugene H. Blabey II
Chairman/CEO

~ Safety and Service ~
July 26, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood,

As the MPO representing Erie and Niagara County in Western New York, the GBNRTC appreciates the opportunity to express its wholehearted endorsement of the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project’s TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York.

Located within the Letchworth State Park in upstate New York, the 19th century iron and steel railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life, with transportation and economic development implications which extend well beyond the Park’s boundaries.

A vital yet weak freight rail link along the Southern Tier Route – one of only two east-west rail corridors within New York State connecting Buffalo and points west, like Chicago, with Binghamton, the New York metropolitan region, Albany and the New England region – the Portageville Bridge serves an incredibly important role for more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and indeed, New York State’s rail network. Benefiting daily are hundreds of New York businesses which rely upon efficient and economical freight rail service to remain globally competitive.

As the existing bridge draws closer to its permanent closure, a newly constructed bridge must be in place to avoid significant freight rail disruptions. Markedly more circuitous routing, longer transit times, and costlier movements resulting from such disruptions will only place greater strain on other transportation assets and will put New York businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

A modern, new bridge, as proposed in the TIGER II application, would ensure that existing freight along the Southern Tier would continue to be routed over it for decades to come and would eliminate speed and weight restrictions which have limited freight rail growth opportunities.

This targeted investment by USDOT, which co-leverages an earlier $3 million financial contribution from the State and a significant commitment to cover half of the project’s total cost by two Class I railroads,
will ensure New York State’s freight rail network along the Southern Tier remains robust for years to come.

As you know, projections for future freight demands indicate a steady increase over the next twenty years. In order to divert some of the anticipated long distance freight traffic off of our already congested highways, it is vital to maintain this critical rail corridor to current speed and weight standards.

The Portageville Bridge is outside of the GBNRTC’s planning area. However, once the project is completed, modern (286K) rail cars will finally be able to utilize the existing NS rail corridor between PANYNJ/New England and Buffalo, increasing bulk, break-bulk and container traffic. Double stacked containers will relieve congestion at PANYNJ, and will enable Buffalo to act as an inland port. This has the potential to bring numerous badly needed railroad, warehousing, distribution and service jobs to the region.

The Portageville Bridge is identified as a system bottleneck in both the New York State Rail Plan and the Niagara Frontier Urban Area Freight Transportation Study. It is also consistent with the GBNRTC’s 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan’s vision, goals and objectives.

With kind regards,

Hal Morse
Executive Director
August 9, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood,

I want to express my strong support for the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project’s TIGER II application which is sponsored by the State of New York. The 19th century iron and steel Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life and is a key link in expanding the rail market in our part of New York State.

The Southern Tier Route is one of only two east-west rail corridors within New York State connecting Buffalo and points west, like Chicago, with Elmira, Binghamton, the New York metropolitan region, Albany and the New England region. The Portageville Bridge serves more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and the New York State’s rail network. It addition to the hundreds of New York businesses which currently rely upon efficient and economical freight rail service to remain globally competitive, we are seeing a significant increase in the demand for rail service in our area driven by the development of the Marcellus Shale gas fields in Pennsylvania and eventually in New York.

The rapid increase in local rail traffic increases the need for a new bridge. The closure of the existing bridge would result in less direct routing, longer transit times, increased freight costs and will place greater strain on other transportation assets putting New York businesses at a competitive disadvantage. The modern, new bridge, as proposed in the TIGER II application, would ensure that existing freight along the Southern Tier would continue to be routed over it for decades to come, while eliminating speed and weight restrictions which have in the past limited freight rail growth.

This targeted investment by USDOT, which co-leverages an earlier $3 million financial contribution from the State and a significant commitment to cover half of the project’s total cost by two Class I railroads, will ensure New York State’s freight rail network along the Southern Tier will continue to be a key component of our transportation network for years to come.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Jay Schissell, Director

400 East Church St. • Elmira, NY 14901 • 607.737.5510 • Fax 607.737.5512
E-mail eetc@stny.rr.com • www.elmirampo.org
July 29, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood,

I appreciate the opportunity to express my wholehearted endorsement of the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project’s TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York.

Located within the 14,350-acre Letchworth State Park in upstate New York, the 19th century iron and steel Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life, with transportation and economic development implications which extend well beyond the Park’s boundaries.

The Portageville Bridge has long been identified as one of the State’s top transportation improvement priorities. The State’s 2009 Rail Plan candidly concedes, “The bridge has been identified as being near the end of its useful life and could be closed at any time...Any long-term closing of the Portage Bridge would threaten the viability of the entire route between Buffalo and Binghamton.” The consequences for the shortline railroads and the New York customers they serve, should this occur, are clear and stark.

As the existing bridge draws closer to its permanent closure, a newly constructed bridge must be in place to avoid significant freight rail disruptions. Markedly more circuitous routing, longer transit times, and costlier movements resulting from such disruptions will only place greater strain on other transportation assets and will put New York businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

A modern, new bridge however will lift operational restrictions by increasing the bridge’s load carrying capacity to 286,000 pounds per railcar and operating speeds from 10 mph to 50 mph. A new bridge will also markedly improve park patron and railroad employee safety.

Not only will this project ensure the continuance of existing freight rail service, but it will enhance the prospects to route new traffic over the line, producing even greater efficiency and economy gains for New York shippers.
New York State has demonstrated a strong commitment to not only maintaining, but expanding the role the State’s freight rail network plays moving the goods the nation produces and consumes. The Portageville Bridge will be a central feature in realizing this goal.

Sincerely,

John Margeson
Chairman
August 13, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of the Finger Lakes Railway Corp. (FGLK) and the Ontario Central Railroad (ONCT) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on the FGLK and many of the customers we serve.

The FGLK and ONCT operate track in central & western New York. At Geneva, NY, we interchange with the Norfolk Southern for shipments to and from our customers. A considerable amount of that traffic comes over the Portageville Bridge. Our customers depend upon efficient and low cost transportation for products such as feed ingredients, lumber and other building materials, chemicals, minerals, and aggregates.

Recent FGLK upgrades provide the potential for handling railcars loaded at 286,000 lbs gross weight on rail. However, FGLK/ONCT customers are unable to take advantage of this efficiency due to weight restrictions involving the Portageville Bridge. The construction of a new bridge will increase the weight capacity of the railcars we are able to ship across it, thereby increasing our fuel efficiency and making rail freight even more competitive versus less fuel-efficient trucks. The effect of any long-term closure of the Portageville Bridge and the severing of the Southern Tier could result in higher costs and less efficient routings for many of the customers who depend on their products moving over the bridge. Indeed, we fear that a significant percentage of that traffic would migrate to the highway. Because we are a small rail carrier, any loss of carloads and revenues, could hurt our ability to remain viable and competitive.

The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends FGLK’s reach and those of our customers into national and international markets.

Appreciably, construction of a new bridge with 286k lbs. capacity will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit rail shipping customers. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for FGLK cannot be stressed enough. I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

With kind regards,

Michael V. Smith, President
August 9, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of applications seeking TIGER II grants, I am writing on behalf of The New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway Corporation (NYS&W) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on the NYS&W and many of the customers we serve.

The NYS&W operates over 400 miles of track in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Our operation extends from Syracuse, NY southerly to Binghamton, NY and then southeasterly along the Southern Tier of New York through Port Jervis, NY and Northern New Jersey to Jersey City, New Jersey, within the District of the Port of New York/New Jersey. Over the entire line, NYS&W is capable of handling the current industry standard 286,000-lb. cars.

At Binghamton, NY we interchange railcars with Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific for shipments to and from our on-line customers. The Portageville Bridge has presented a long-standing problem for NYS&W and our customers. The weight restrictions, and occasional outages, on the Portageville Bridge significantly limit our routing options, resulting in longer transport times, greater use of energy, greater expense to the customer and less competition. Our customers depend upon efficient and low cost transportation for products such as feed ingredients, lumber and other building materials, chemicals, aggregates, plastics, lumber, food products, paper products, motor vehicles, and metals.

Even with the restricted weight, a considerable amount of that traffic comes over the Portageville Bridge. The effect of any long-term closure of the Portageville Bridge and the severing of the Southern Tier would result in higher costs and less efficient routings for the customers who depend on their products moving over the bridge. Indeed, we fear that a significant percentage of that traffic would migrate to the highway. Because we are a small rail carrier, any loss of carloads and revenues could hurt our ability to remain viable and competitive; many of our
customers are similarly vulnerable to the negative impacts of higher costs and reduced business volumes.

The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends NYS&W’s reach and those of our customers into national and international markets.

Construction of a new bridge will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit current customers and encourage economic development in a region that has suffered since long before the current nation-wide economic difficulties. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for NYS&W cannot be stressed enough.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Nathan R. Fenno

cc: Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT
    Rick Crawford, Norfolk Southern Corp.
July 13, 2010

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

Dear Mr. LaHood,

I am writing to express support for the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project’s TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York. These funds would be used for the reconstruction and repairs of the Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure, located in the Letchworth State Park.

This Bridge was constructed in the 19th century and is one of the only two east-west rail corridors within New York State. This freight rail serves as an incredibly important role for more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and New York State’s rail network. The Bridge benefits hundreds of New York businesses daily, which rely upon efficient and economical freight rail service to remain globally competitive.

The Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is a critical part of New York State’s rail system. A reconstructed bridge is necessary for east-west transportation of goods as well as giving our businesses an opportunity to globally compete.

Sincerely,

Tony Jordan
Member of Assembly
112th District
August 17, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood,

I write to endorse the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project’s (PBRP) TIGER II application, sponsored by the State of New York.

Located within Letchworth State Park in upstate New York, the 19th century iron and steel Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure is fast approaching the end of its useful design life. The State’s 2009 Rail Plan states, “The bridge has been identified as being near the end of its useful life and could be closed at any time…Any long-term closing of the Portage Bridge would threaten the viability of the entire route between Buffalo and Binghamton.” The consequences for the shortline railroads and the New York customers they serve, should this occur, are clear and stark.

A vital yet weak freight rail link along the Southern Tier Route – one of only two east-west rail corridors within New York State connecting Buffalo and points west (such as Chicago), with Binghamton, the New York metropolitan region, Albany and the New England region – the Portageville Bridge serves an incredibly important role for more than a dozen shortline railroads, two Class I railroads, and indeed, New York State’s rail network. Hundreds of New York businesses rely upon the bridge for efficient and economical freight rail service to remain globally competitive.
As the existing bridge draws closer to its permanent closure, a newly constructed bridge must be in place to avoid significant freight rail disruptions. Markedly more circuitous routing, longer transit times, and costlier movements resulting from such disruptions will only place greater strain on other transportation assets and will put New York businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

A modern, new bridge will lift operational restrictions by increasing the bridge’s load carrying capacity to 286,000 pounds per railcar, and operating speeds from 10 mph to 50 mph. A new bridge will also markedly improve park patron and railroad employee safety. Constructing a modern bridge, as proposed in the TIGER II application, would insure the continuity of the Southern Tier rail corridor for decades and would eliminate speed and weight restrictions, which have in the past limited freight rail growth opportunities.

New York State has demonstrated a strong commitment to not only maintaining, but expanding its freight rail network, a crucial effort in support of existing commerce and generating economic development. The Replacement Project is central to this effort. For these reasons, I ask for your support for the PBRP TIGER II application.

Sincerely,

Roy J. McDonald
July 22, 2010

Secretary Ray LaHood
United State Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington DC 20590

Re: Support of New York State DOT TIGER II Application
Portageville Bridge Replacement

Dear Secretary LaHood,

I would like to express the strong support of the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study for the TIGER II application being submitted by the New York State Department of Transportation to replace the Portageville Bridge on the Norfolk Southern Railroad's Southern Tier Line.

As the MPO for this region, BMTS understands the importance of freight movement, having completed the Binghamton Regional Freight Study in 2008. Providing shippers access to both truck and rail options can keep rates competitive. BMTS supported the acquisition of the Southern Tier Line by Norfolk Southern from Conrail in 1999, realizing the opportunities a well maintained and operated line could bring to this area.

NYSDOT recognized in its 2009 State Rail Plan that the Portageville bridge is beyond its useful life, and could be closed at any time. It already is limited to 273,000# cars and a 10mph speed. Replacing this structure with a modern bridge that will permit today's weight and speed standards will provide economic opportunity to our region, and across the Southern Tier of New York. Conversely, closure of the bridge will essentially close the line between Binghamton and Buffalo. This will impact not only local shippers, but also shortline railroads like the Owego & Harford Railway, for whom the NS is their only Class 1 interchange.

The fact that Norfolk Southern will pay 50% of project costs is a positive example of a public-private partnership to restore critical infrastructure.

The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study strongly supports this TIGER II application, and believes the project is in keeping with the objectives of the USDOT.

Sincerely,

Peter Andreasen, Chair
Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study Policy Committee
August 19, 2010

Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Certification Letter for the Norfolk Southern Portageville Bridge Replacement  
Project TIGER II Discretionary Grants Program Proposal

Per the Notice of Funding Availability for the Department of Transportation’s National Infrastructure Investments (TIGER II Discretionary Grants Program) under the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for 2010 as published in the June 1, 2010 edition of the Federal Register, this letter certifies that the Norfolk Southern TIGER II Discretionary Grants Program application for the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project is included as part of a recommendation in the current Long Range Transportation Plan for the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region: 2007-2027 Update.

The Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) will amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) consistent with the adopted GTC TIP Procedures Manual to include said project prior to award if USDOT selects it to receive TIGER II Discretionary Grants Program funding.

Sincerely,

Richard Perrin, AICP

cc: Robert A. Traver, Acting Regional Director - NYS Department of Transportation-Region 4  
Herbert Smith Assistant Manager-Government Relations - Norfolk Southern Corporation  
Rick Crawford, Special Assistant-Government Relations - Norfolk Southern Corporation
August 9, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of the Rochester & Southern Railroad (RSR) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on the RSR and many of the customers we serve.

The RSR operates track in western New York State. At Silver Springs, NY, we interchange with the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) for shipments to and from our customers. A considerable amount of that traffic moves over the NS’s Portageville Bridge. Our customers depend upon efficient and low cost transportation for products such as minerals, feed ingredients, lumber and other building materials, and chemicals. RSR has upgraded its lines to enable it to handle railcars loaded to 286,000 lbs gross weight on rail. However, some RSR customers are unable to take advantage of this efficiency due to weight restrictions involving the NS’s Portageville Bridge. The construction of a new bridge will increase the weight capacity of the railcars we are able to ship across it, thereby increasing our fuel efficiency and making rail freight even more competitive versus less fuel-efficient trucks. The effect of any long-term closure of the Portageville Bridge and the severing of the Southern Tier route could result in higher costs and less efficient routings for many of the customers whose shipments move over the bridge. Indeed, we fear that a significant percentage of that traffic would migrate to the highway. Because we are a small rail carrier, any loss of carloads and revenues, could hurt our ability to remain viable and competitive.

The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends RSR reach and those of our customers into national and international markets.
Appreciably, construction of a new bridge with 286,000 lbs capacity will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit current and encourage new rail shipping customers. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for RSR cannot be stressed enough.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

With kind regards,

Ronald D. Klein
Vice President – Marketing
Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad
Rochester & Southern Railroad
August 9, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of the Rochester & Southern Railroad (RSR) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on the RSR and many of the customers we serve.

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The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends RSR reach and those of our customers into national and international markets.
Appreciably, construction of a new bridge with 286,000 lbs capacity will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit current and encourage new rail shipping customers. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for RSR cannot be stressed enough.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

With kind regards,

Ronald D. Klein
Vice President – Marketing
Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad
Rochester & Southern Railroad
July 16, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood,

As a long time advocate for the preservation of rail freight service within the eight counties of the Southern Tier East Region I appreciate this opportunity to express my support the TIGER II application of the state of New York for the Portageville Bridge Replacement Project. The Portageville Bridge freight railroad structure, built more than a century ago is fast approaching the end of its useful design life, with transportation and economic development implications which impact our Region and extend to the entire northeastern United States.

The Portageville Rail Bridge is a vital rail link between the upper mid-west and Ontario Province in Canada with the Port of New York, along the Southern Tier Route. It supports one of only two east-west Class I rail corridors within New York State, and the other route (the "water level route") is approaching its operational capacity and must serve the competing interest of passenger and freight traffic. Within our region the Portageville Bridge provides a critical connection for two Class I railroads (Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific) and a short line (New York Susquehanna and Western). These railroads through the Southern Tier are the only significant east-west rail freight competition to CSX which operates the water level route more than 70 miles to the north.

A replacement bridge must be in place as soon as possible to avoid significant freight rail disruptions, including further congestion in the Port of New York. The loss of this bridge would result in more circuitous routing, longer transit times, and costlier movements resulting from such disruptions will only place greater strain on other transportation assets and will put New York businesses at a competitive disadvantage. In contrast the modern replacement bridge, as proposed in the TIGER II application, would eliminate speed and weight restrictions which have in the past limited freight rail growth opportunities.

This targeted investment by USDOT, which co-leverages an earlier $3 million financial contribution from the State and a significant commitment to cover half of the project's total cost by two Class I railroads, will ensure New York State's freight rail network along the Southern Tier remains robust for years to come. I urge positive consideration and funding of this application.

Sincerely,

Robert Augenstern, Director
August 5, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of the Lehigh Railway (LRWY) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on the LRWY and many of the customers we serve.

The LRWY operates track in New York and Pennsylvania between Sayre and Mehoopany, PA. At Sayre, PA, we interchange with the Norfolk Southern for shipments to and from our customers. A considerable amount of that traffic comes over the Portageville Bridge. Our customers depend upon efficient and low cost transportation for products such as feed ingredients, lumber and other building materials, chemicals, steel pipe, minerals, and aggregates. LRWY upgrades provide the potential for handling railcars loaded at 286,000 lbs gross weight on rail. However, LRWY customers are unable to take advantage of this efficiency due to weight restrictions involving the Portageville Bridge. The construction of a new bridge will increase the weight capacity of the railcars we are able to ship across it, thereby increasing our fuel efficiency and making rail freight even more competitive versus less fuel-efficient trucks. The effect of any long-term closure of the Portageville Bridge and the severing of the Southern Tier could result in higher costs and less efficient routings for many of the customers who depend on their products moving over the bridge. Indeed, we fear that a significant percentage of that traffic would migrate to the highway. Because we are a small rail carrier, any loss of carloads and revenues, could hurt our ability to remain viable and competitive.

The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends LRWY reach and those of our customers into national and international markets.

Appreciably, construction of a new bridge with 286 capacity will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor — a development which will benefit current and encourage new rail shipping customers. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for LRWY cannot be stressed enough.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

With kind regards,

Steven May
Lehigh Railway, LLC
August 5, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you consider a number of TIGER II applications seeking grants, I wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of the Owego & Harford Railway (OHRY) to urge you to support an application for funding New York State’s Portageville Bridge Project, which will have an immediate and direct effect on the OHRY and many of the customers we serve.

The OHRY operates track in New York between Owego and North Harford, NY. At Owego, NY, we interchange with the Norfolk Southern and the Canadian Pacific for shipments to and from our customers. A considerable amount of that traffic comes over the Portageville Bridge. Our customers depend upon efficient and low cost transportation for products such as feed ingredients, lumber and other building materials, chemicals, minerals, and aggregates. OHRY upgrades provide the potential for handling railcars loaded at 286,000 lbs gross weight on rail. However, OHRY customers are unable to take advantage of this efficiency due to weight restrictions involving the Portageville Bridge. The construction of a new bridge will increase the weight capacity of the railcars we are able to ship across it, thereby increasing our fuel efficiency and making rail freight even more competitive versus less fuel-efficient trucks. The effect of any long-term closure of the Portageville Bridge and the severing of the Southern Tier could result in higher costs and less efficient routings for many of the customers who depend on their products moving over the bridge. Indeed, we fear that a significant percentage of that traffic would migrate to the highway. Because we are a small rail carrier, any loss of carloads and revenues, could hurt our ability to remain viable and competitive.

The Portageville Bridge links not only Buffalo and Binghamton together along the Southern Tier, but more broadly extends OHRY reach and those of our customers into national and international markets.

Appreciably, construction of a new bridge with 286 capacity will usher in an era of sustained freight rail growth opportunities for the Southern Tier Corridor – a development which will benefit current and encourage new rail shipping customers. The importance of the Portageville Bridge for OHRY cannot be stressed enough.

I sincerely appreciate your full and fair consideration of this TIGER II application.

With kind regards,

Steven May  
Owego & Harford Railway