



Elaine Chao; Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590
United States

Project No: 40-141, Haddam Swing Bridge DOT# 01138.

July 19, 2018

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write on behalf of the Connecticut Tourism Coalition in strong support of the requested \$17.3 million dollars by the Towns of Haddam and East Haddam for the addition of a pedestrian walkway to the Swing Bridge connecting the two towns over the Connecticut River.

This project presents an opportunity to improve public safety and will provide an essential support to recent infrastructure improvements that have been ongoing in Haddam and East Haddam over the past 10 years. The addition of this walkway will not only provide an essential link over the Connecticut River for the region, but it would also open up new opportunities for the small businesses of the area to collaborate and increase the tourism appeal for both towns.

The Connecticut Tourism Coalition is comprised of industry-leading businesses and associations located throughout the state, and we believe that having a safe, pedestrian-friendly link across the Connecticut River will attract significantly more tourists to Haddam and East Haddam. Many of Connecticut's most popular attractions such as the Goodspeed Opera House, Nathan Hale School House, and the Steady Habit Brewing Company lie within walking distance of the Swing Bridge. Should this walkway be added, the added accessibility could not only support businesses immediately around the bridge, but the added tourism appeal would bring more guests to the many state parks and businesses that make use of the Connecticut River.

The time for adding a walkway to the swing bridge is now. If awarded, the walkway addition could be incorporated into the planned 2020 Department of Transportation rehabilitation of the bridge, and the costs of adding a walkway would be drastically reduced when compared to refitting the bridge at a later time. In addition, adding the walkway now would support the other completed and ongoing improvements to both downtown areas, increasing the viability of the region supporting out tourism initiatives, local businesses, and downtown revitalization projects.

For the reasons listed above, as well as the letters drafted by the many other stakeholders in favor of the walkway, I hope you consider the immense impact that making the Swing Bridge pedestrian friendly could have on the Town of Haddam and East Haddam. The Connecticut Tourism Coalition respectfully requests your support as we continue to increase the tourism appeal of our cities and support the development of our small and historic businesses.

Sincerely,
Stephen Tagliatela
Connecticut Tourism Coalition President