

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 12, 2022

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

Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

We are writing out of concern regarding the application of discretionary funds for seismic retrofit projects under the Department of Transportation (DOT). Of specific concern is DOT's benefit cost analyses (BCA) in evaluating seismic retrofit projects for bridges. This puts projects like the Golden Gate Bridge, on which many of our constituents rely, at a disadvantage in applying for federal funding opportunities. These opportunities include the upcoming Bridge Investment Program -made available by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It is critically important for the safety of our constituents and fairness in funding that the DOT treat seismic retrofit projects in the same way other bridge rehabilitation or bridge replacement projects are treated and reduce the timeline for calculated benefits of seismic retrofit projects.

It is our understanding that the DOT's BCA does not measure the benefits of seismic retrofitting projects to occur immediately, as it does other retrofitting and rehabilitation bridge projects. Thus, seismic retrofitting for the Golden Gate Bridge isn't seen to bring immediate benefits. The methodology further does not account for the added protection such seismic retrofitting brings due to damage from smaller, though more frequent, earthquakes and that it is estimated to extend the life of the bridge.

Consistent with Federal Highway Administration policies, large seismic retrofit projects are designed to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) specifications. However, due to the flawed methodology used by the DOT to determine the BCA for such projects, these projects will continue to fare poorly. Congress' intent was that seismic retrofit projects would not just be eligible but competitive for funding when it explicitly included such projects in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, including in the Bridge Investment Program. This must be remedied before the Notice of Funding Opportunity is released for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Bridge Investment Program.

The Golden Gate Bridge is an iconic landmark, instantly recognizable internationally. It is widely recognized in need of seismic retrofitting. This is critically important given that the Golden Gate Bridge sits near two major faults, the Hayward and San Andreas, making smaller

earthquakes a common occurrence and greatly increasing the likelihood of a maximum credible event.

It is imperative that DOT correct the flawed BCA methodology that impacts the Golden Gate Bridge, as well as other bridges, to be unnecessarily excluded for federal discretionary funds when seeking assistance seismic retrofit projects. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress