



PAT GERARD
CHAIR

PINELLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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May 5, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Pinellas County Government for consideration of the Dunedin Causeway Bridges project to be selected for funding through the Department of Transportation for National Infrastructure Investment's BUILD Transportation Grant. The project involves the construction of a mid-level movable bridge and tide relief bridge in place of the two existing bridges of which are the sole connection from the City of Dunedin to Honeymoon Island State Park and residential living. The Project Development and Environment Study for the Dunedin Causeway Bridges project is complete and anticipated for approval in June. Once approved, the project is near shovel ready for construction. The selection of this project for grant funding will promote hundreds of jobs in our local economy, directly aligning with the County's Strategic Plan goal to *Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality*.

Located on the Gulf Coast of Florida, Pinellas County is home to nearly one million residents, with an additional 15.5 million visitors each year, including seasonal residents and tourists. The County values the significance the City of Dunedin and Honeymoon Island State Park bring to the community, both economically and as a favorite destination for citizens and visitors to enjoy natural Florida. Honeymoon Island is enriched with serene beaches, bountiful wildlife and natural vegetation and is the ferry terminal for access to another unspoiled state park, Caladesi Island. Honeymoon Island has a direct annual economic impact of \$150 million. The Dunedin Causeway, located along the existing bridges, is a popular area for citizens and visitors to enjoy recreational activities such as walking, jogging and biking on the designated trail and swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding, and fishing in the Intracoastal Waterway. The new bridges design will better accommodate these outdoor activities, offering wider and safer bicycle lanes, sidewalk and trail.

Pinellas County government confidently supports investing in the longevity of the Dunedin Causeway Bridges to meet our County's current and future needs, and in doing so, providing safe and efficient transportation systems to support the efficient flow of motorists, commerce and regional connectivity.

Sincerely,

PAT GERARD, Chair
Pinellas County Commission