



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

April 2, 2014

In Reply Refer To:
HRDI- 60

Mr. Ananth Prasad
Chairman
Transportation Research Board
Long-Term Bridge Performance Committee
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Prasad:

Thank you for your January 27 letter report of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Long-Term Bridge Performance (LTBP) Committee meeting of December 3, 2013. We will continue to seek your comments and suggestions as we address the recommendations provided in your letter report. This letter responds to the findings and recommendations that the Committee specifically provided in your fourth letter report.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) appreciates the Committee's recognition of the hard work of the LTBP team and program accomplishments. The Committee's continuing review and advice is important to this success.

The FHWA will continue to seek opportunities to brief State transportation agencies and executives about the progress and accomplishments of the LTBP program focusing on its short- and long-term benefits. We have included our annual briefings to the members of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Highway Subcommittee on Bridges and Structures, and other AASHTO Committees and Subcommittees as appropriate.

We greatly appreciate the Committee's endorsement of the State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC), a concept developed as a result of the FHWA Every Day Counts initiative. As LTBP products roll out and champions are identified, we will consider using the STIC to encourage State departments of transportation to support the LTBP program where appropriate.

The ability of FHWA to effectively conduct the LTBP program will require support from the States and other members of the highway engineering community in addition to the availability of adequate internal resources. The FHWA highly values the LTBP program and actively maintains and updates multiyear strategic plans, tactical roadmaps, and performance metrics. The effort is evident as we develop and communicate Bridge Performance Operational Matrices for each of the LTBP study topics. We are also implementing a project tracking system that addresses schedules, milestones and budgets. These initiatives embody the suggested "business plan," that we will present at the next Committee meeting.

The main focus of the LTBP program is the high-priority study topics developed with the assistance of our stakeholders. Other studies we are conducting via the LTBP program, such as the performance of unpainted weathering steel, complement rather than distract us from the goals and main focus of the LTBP program. We appreciate, however, the Committee's comment to ensure focus on data collection of the initial high-priority topics the States have identified. With our field data collection contractors on board, and with the future delivery of the RABIT™ bridge assessment tool, we will demonstrate our focus on high-priority performance issues.

The FHWA continues to coordinate not just the LTBP program but other related programs and activities, both internally and with many external organizations including University Transportation Centers, industry associations, and other research institutions, and we will continue to address the needs of the bridge engineering community. Efforts associated with coordination and collaboration will expand as the LTBP program matures.

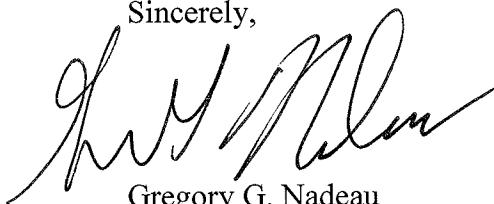
The FHWA considers the LTBP Bridge Portal central to the overall success of the LTBP program. We are committed to pursue all avenues to meet the Federal Government's requirements for public-access Web sites to get the Portal online and available to outside organizations.

The LTBP program is actively pursuing development of a single bridge-performance index; however, the research is in its initial phases and it is too early to determine if this approach is viable. Meanwhile, we will continue to consider other approaches.

Local bridges make up a significant portion of our Nation's bridge inventory. As discussed previously, results from a study of the characteristic parameters of the National Bridge Inventory database suggest that the State-owned bridges included in our clusters are representative of locally owned bridges. Nonetheless, we will continue our efforts to work with local bridge owners within the context of the LTBP program.

Again, I thank you and the members of your Committee for your support of the LTBP program. Should you have any questions regarding this response or the LTBP program, please feel free to contact Dr. Hamid Ghasemi at (202) 493-3042.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory G. Nadeau', written in a cursive style.

Gregory G. Nadeau
Deputy Administrator