

Gov. Evers, Minnesota Gov. Walz: Seek federal funds for major Duluth- Superior bridge project

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, today announced their departments of transportation will seek \$889.5 million in federal funding, available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, to rebuild the John A. Blatnik Bridge between Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin.

“From students to workers to commerce, the Blatnik Bridge is an absolutely critical piece of our economy and a vital route for workers, business owners, students, and visitors to get from point A to point B every day,” said Gov. Evers. “The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a once in a generation opportunity to modernize the critical infrastructure that makes our economy work, and this project is a perfect candidate for this funding to strengthen our port cities in Wisconsin and Minnesota.”

“I’m proud to partner with Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers to ensure the Blatnik bridge gets the funding it needs to be completed safely and efficiently,” said Gov. Tim Walz. “This is an important infrastructure project for Northern Minnesota, our neighbors in Wisconsin, and our interconnected economies. We look forward to moving forward on this project.”

The Blatnik Bridge was built in 1961 and carries Interstate-535 and US 53 connecting Duluth and Superior over a tributary of Lake Superior. The route is an important freight and commercial connection between the Twin Ports and serves more than 33,000 cars per day.

“The Blatnik Bridge is the most vital connection between the two cities of Duluth

and Superior,” said Superior Mayor Jim Paine. “Despite the state and natural border between us, the bridge makes us a single, greater community: the Twin Ports. Every day thousands of our citizens rely on this indispensable bridge to connect us to work, home, and commerce. This bridge is not only our link to one another, but to the future of both our cities.”

“Connectivity is something I hear about all the time,” said Duluth Mayor Emily Larson. “Public infrastructure that supports people, businesses, and visitors are the things that bring us together. The Blatnik Bridge is quite literally a prime example of this—a critical piece of infrastructure that connects not just Duluth, MN, and Superior, WI, but entire regional economies across two states that also supports the Great Lakes shipping industry connecting our regions to the rest of the world. I am thankful to the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin for investing in this vital connection point for all of our communities.”

If successful, the application for federal funding will cover a substantial portion of the project’s budget and streamline scheduling. Design work for the project, which would determine specifications and shape the total cost of the project, will begin in the near future.

Jointly owned and managed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the Blatnik Bridge is currently load posted for 40 tons. The replacement project will improve safety and accommodate oversize and overweight loads.

“Wisconsin and Minnesota have a history of working together to make the most of our unique geography,” said WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson. “Rebuilding the Blatnik Bridge is a great example of our regional commitment to transportation infrastructure that offers greater safety, resiliency, and quality of life.”

“We’re grateful to our partners at WisDOT for the shared commitment to the vitality of the Twin Ports,” said MnDOT Commissioner Nancy Daubenberger. “With funding through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we’ll be able to rebuild the Blatnik Bridge to modern standards, improve safety and accessibility, and ensure the communities of Duluth and Superior continue to thrive—and I know we’re all eager to get to work.”

The application is part of the federal Bridge Investment Program (BIP), which is benefitting from BIL funding and focuses on improving existing bridges.

Gov. Evers' letter to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg accompanying the joint application for BIP funding is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).