

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Klobuchar, Smith demand Secretary Duffy release Blatnik Bridge project funding

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Call comes as Trump blocked infrastructure funding as act of political retribution and threatened to [block the opening](#) of a bridge between Michigan and Ontario last month

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and Tina Smith (D-MN) called on U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Sean Duffy to give final approval and release the \$1.05 billion grant for the Blatnik Bridge replacement project so construction on the project can begin. The call comes as the Trump Administration has attempted to illegally cut funding for infrastructure projects as a tool for political retribution on other states and threatened to [block the opening](#) of a bridge between Michigan and Ontario last month.

“The folks in Minnesota and Wisconsin who are planning the reconstruction of the Blatnik Bridge have dotted their I’s and crossed their T’s. Now, it’s time the President and Secretary Duffy give the final greenlight for this project to move forward so we can keep Wisconsinites safe and support the local economy,” **said Senator Baldwin.**

“After over 60 years of connecting commuters and visitors to Minnesota, this funding for a replacement project will bolster safety and increase reliability of the Blatnik Bridge,” **said Senator Klobuchar.** “The U.S. Department of Transportation must release this grant so this incredibly important project can move forward without further delay and increased costs.”

“Delays in replacing the Blatnik Bridge would be incredibly costly to Minnesota and

Wisconsin,” **said Senator Smith.** “The administration should act swiftly to make sure this project moves forward on schedule and doesn’t cost Northland taxpayers more. Let’s get this done on time and within budget.”

The Blatnik Bridge is a vital connection between Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin, with over 33,000 vehicles passing through daily and 265,000 trucks transporting nearly \$4 billion in goods annually. Since the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which all three Senators supported, Senators [Baldwin](#), [Klobuchar](#), and [Smith](#) have been advocating for federal funds to replace the Blatnik Bridge.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#) and below.

Dear Secretary Duffy,

We write in support of executing the amended grant agreement submitted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and Wisconsin Department of Transportation for \$1.05 billion in awarded funding through the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) and National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) programs for the Blatnik Bridge replacement project. Execution of the amended grant agreement will allow the Departments to advance to the construction phase of the project.

The Blatnik Bridge carries Interstate Highway 535 and serves an average of 33,000 vehicles per day traveling over the St. Louis Bay. It is essential for freight movement and commercial traffic for not only the Twin Ports of Duluth and Superior, but also for the entire Upper Midwest region. Many businesses and industries in the region rely on the bridge, as the port is a vital shipping center, and commuters, students, and workers also use the bridge to drive to the office, visit friends, and shop. The Port of Duluth-Superior is also the largest U.S. port on the Great Lakes and one of the largest marine gateways for U.S. trade with Canada, one of the top trade partners of Minnesota, Wisconsin and the whole United States.

The Blatnik Bridge has been in service for over sixty years, and in that time, it’s fallen into poor condition with significant structural deterioration. This has created serious capacity, mobility, and safety concerns. The awarded funding for the project will replace all structural elements of the bridge and restore the bridge to its original operational condition – improving the safety, efficiency, and reliability of

this key regional connection.

With the approval of the Federal Highway Administration, the Minnesota Department of Transportation has issued request for proposal documents for the Blatnik Bridge replacement project. As such, we respectfully request that the amended grant agreement be executed and funding be obligated for the project as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

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