

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

September 7, 2017

Kevin C. Womack, Ph.D., F.ASCE
Director, Office of Research, Development and Technology
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Director Womack:

We write to you to express our support for the proposal led by the Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation (CAIT) at Rutgers University for a Regional University Transportation Center in Federal Region 2. CAIT leads a diverse group of institutions of higher education with the aim of improving the durability and extending the life of our transportation infrastructure.

For this regional proposal, CAIT is collaborating with a diverse consortium of universities in the northeast and Puerto Rico, including Princeton University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Atlantic Cape Community College, Rowan University, Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, Columbia University, Cornell University, Farmingdale State College, and the University at Buffalo. Joining forces with these research institutions will enhance Rutgers' ability to respond to our mounting infrastructure challenges. As the Administration and Congress seek to meet these challenges head-on, CAIT's work will help to better protect and direct investments in our infrastructure.

CAIT's research advances these goals through its use of innovative technologies and practices to expedite construction and to increase the durability and safety of highways and bridges. CAIT has a long track record of providing solutions to complex transportation problems, such as their work on the Federal Highway Administration's Long-Term Bridge Performance (LTBP) program, which CAIT has led since 2008. CAIT researchers, as a part of the LTBP, helped develop the RABIT bridge deck assessment tool to allow bridge managers and engineers to easily identify the anticipated future condition concerns of a bridge deck.

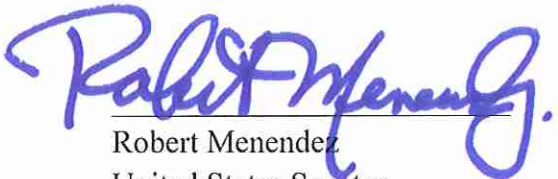
CAIT has been recognized as a leader for infrastructure innovation; in 2014 the RABIT received the ASCE Pankow Award for Innovation, and in 2016 their THMPER device won them the award for an unprecedented second time. THMPER can test a 100-foot three-lane bridge in about 45 minutes, and evaluate an estimated 300-plus bridges per year at about 25 percent the cost of current testing methods. CAIT's research has been recognized and implemented across

the industry, providing quantitative information that will directly support decisions and cost-effective practices to maintain the durability of the Nation's infrastructure.

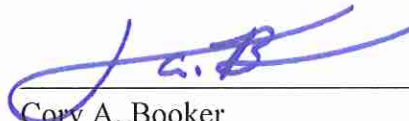
Through its previous iteration as a National University Transportation Center, CAIT unveiled the bridge evaluation and accelerated structural testing (BEAST) facility to study future performance and lifespan of materials and elements for aging highway bridges. BEAST uniquely subjects full-scale bridge deck systems to extreme traffic loading and rapid-cycle environmental changes in a controlled environment to advance aging by as much as 30 times, making it possible to simulate 15 to 20 years of wear-and-tear in just a few months. The facility is a critical component to understanding the durability of our nation's bridges.

For 19 years CAIT has consistently fulfilled its mission of advancing transportation research, education, and technology. Its selection to lead a Regional University Transportation Center will make their continued innovative research possible, and we urge you to give all due consideration to this proposal.

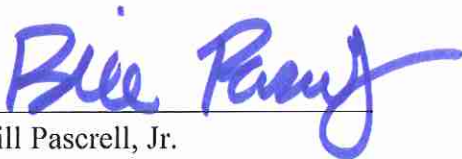
Sincerely,



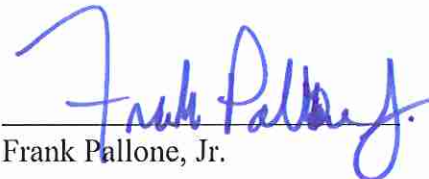
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



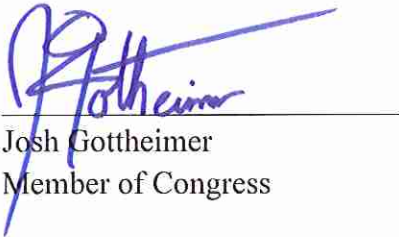
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



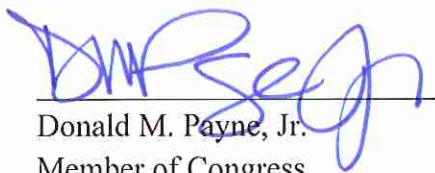
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



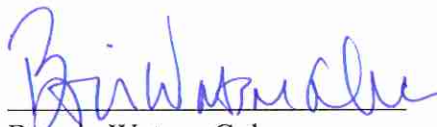
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress




Donald Norcross
Member of Congress




Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress




Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress




Albio Sires
Member of Congress




Tom MacArthur
Member of Congress




Frank A. LoBiondo
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Leonard Lance
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