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January 6, 2025

United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for FY 2025 RAISE Discretionary Program: Planning Grant for East Grand Forks-Grand Forks Bridge Crossing Project

Dear Secretary of Transportation,

I am writing in support of the City of East Grand Forks, Minnesota's application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. The RAISE funding will facilitate completion of planning efforts to conduct preliminary engineering design, environmental documentation, and permitting for the long-planned bridge connection(s) across the Red River of the North between the cities of East Grand Forks, Minnesota, and Grand Forks, North Dakota. The multi-State planning project will support a range of multimodal options that address diverse local and regional community needs.

The project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals in that it utilizes a multi-agency partnership to address critical mobility and connectivity, quality of life, equity, and economic challenges in the East Grand Forks, Grand Forks area: two (2) cities, four (4) local jurisdictions, and two (2) states. The communities have identified a need for a new river crossing(s) between the two cities to enhance safety, reduce congestion at the existing crossings, and build active infrastructure to strengthen the current transportation network. The project will address these challenges by providing a safer connection(s) for freight and vehicular traffic across the Red River of the North that includes multimodal access for all users walking, rolling, bicycling, or taking transit between the cities and the surrounding areas.

The population of the East Grand Forks-Grand Forks region is forecasted to increase by approximately 39 percent between 2015 and 2045. Infrastructure improvements are critically needed so residents and visitors of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities may access jobs, healthcare, and housing. The completion of proposed activities will strengthen our system of transport and contribute to growth in our region, including the anticipated growth. In addition to

the improvements noted above, we anticipate that the project, when completed, will facilitate economic growth with high-paying job opportunities for people from all backgrounds.

We support the City of East Grand Forks' application for the funding of the planning activities for East Grand Forks-Grand Forks Bridge Crossing project through FY 2025 RAISE Discretionary Program and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this grant proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 701-239-4151.

Sincerely,

Brent Baldwin

President – Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association