

April 15, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Madam Secretary:

On behalf of the 128 toll facility operators in the United States, the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA), we are writing to request the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) provide assistance to toll operators impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic response.

As a result of America's unified response to limit the spread of COVID-19 by restricting public gatherings, shuttering non-essential businesses, and limiting travel, toll facilities have suffered traffic and revenue declines of 50% to 90%. Traffic declines have sharply reduced toll operator revenues and there is no certainty as to how deep the traffic declines will go or how long it will take to return to "normal" traffic levels.

The U.S. Department of Transportation plays an important role in administering federal credit assistance programs such as the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program. A number of IBTTA's members have successfully utilized this important program since its inception. While TIFIA program support has been critical to completing many toll facilities across the country, the dramatic reduction in traffic and toll revenue has impacted the cash flow of toll operators. Because of this, we are interested in working with USDOT and the Build America Bureau (Bureau) to utilize existing TIFIA legislative authorities and possibly expand authorities in order to provide maximum flexibility to borrowers under the program.

The ability to assist current TIFIA borrowers with assistance will send a strong signal to consumers and investors that the tolling facilities they have come to rely on for daily mobility will be available and strong when the pandemic ends and the recovery begins.

IBTTA members have proposed a number of ideas to provide additional TIFIA program flexibilities. Some of these authorities are currently available within the TIFIA program. However, some of these authorities have either not been used or been used sparingly. In addition, several of our proposals would require new legislative authorities.

1. Providing for a borrower to seek a one-time amendment to reset the interest rate on outstanding TIFIA loans.

- 2. If final project costs of a current TIFIA loan exceed 33%, allow a borrower in good standing to amend the TIFIA loan agreement to borrow up to the statutorily allowed 49% of eligible project costs.**
- 3. Provide the ability to convert TIFIA near-term mandatory debt service payments to scheduled debt service payments for a specific period of time.**
- 4. Provide the ability for borrowers to eliminate the mandatory pre-payment provisions in outstanding TIFIA loans.**
- 5. Enhance the ability to refund outstanding TIFIA loans with new TIFIA loans.**

These are extremely challenging times for all Americans. Taking positive steps that support large sectors of the American economy through flexible federal administration of the TIFIA program are vital to ensuring that we emerge from this pandemic as strong as we can be. We would ask that you consider these proposals by helping the tolling industry - which provides essential mobility to millions of passenger and commercial vehicles every day.

Thank you for your leadership during this battle of a lifetime and for seriously considering the U.S. tolling industry's request for assistance. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these proposals in more detail, please contact Neil Gray, IBTTA's Director of Government Affairs, at 202-270-8655 or neilgray@ibtta.org.

Sincerely,



Samuel Johnson
President, IBTTA
Chief Operations Officer, Transportation
Corridor Agencies



Patrick D. Jones
Executive Director & CEO
IBTTA