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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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March 16, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

As you know, on March 15, 2018, a pedestrian bridge connecting Florida International University (FIU) to the City of Sweetwater collapsed onto a state roadway, killing and injuring several individuals. The bridge was a 174-foot, 950-ton pedestrian bridge designed to allow FIU students to cross over a heavily trafficked thoroughfare. The project was partially funded by an \$11.4 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) in 2013.

In light of the fact that there were multiple agencies and companies involved, we're going to need a clear understanding of who had what role in this horrible tragedy. There should have been adequate and appropriate oversight on the ground. If anyone dropped the ball and it contributed to this tragedy then they should be held accountable.

Please provide a detailed explanation of DOT's involvement in the construction of the pedestrian bridge, along with all relevant documentation pertaining to the TIGER grant, including the grant agreement itself, any memoranda of understanding between DOT and state and local entities concerning the administration and oversight of this project and any letters issued by DOT related to the project, such as letters of concurrence for the selection of contractors and any letters of approval.

The Honorable Elaine Chao

March 16, 2018

Page 2

In addition, please provide any other explanatory information that you believe supplies the necessary context for understanding DOT's role in the design and construction of the pedestrian bridge. Particularly, given the use of federal funds to help finance the construction of the pedestrian bridge, please provide information and relevant documents detailing what steps DOT, along with state and local entities, took to review and oversee the project's engineering, construction, safety and inspection. Please also provide information on what safety requirements are necessary for conducting testing and ongoing construction of a bridge over active traffic.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this serious matter. Please provide a response along with the requested documents by Friday, March 23, 2018.

Sincerely,



BILL NELSON

U.S. Senator

cc: The Honorable John Thune, Chairman