



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

April 18, 2013

In Reply Refer To:
HRDI-60

Mr. Ananth Prasad
Chairman
Transportation Research Board
Long-Term Bridge Performance Committee
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Prasad:

Thank you for your February 19 letter report of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Long-Term Bridge Performance (LTBP) Committee findings and recommendations from the November 27-28, 2012 meeting. We remain committed to meet regularly and to seek your comments and suggestions as we consider the recommendations provided in your letter report. We appreciate the Committee's continuing review and advice that has led to the success of the LTBP program.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is grateful for Mr. Bruce Johnson's leadership and outstanding job of acting on your behalf during the meeting. This letter responds to the recommendations the Committee specifically provided in your third letter report.

The FHWA appreciates the Committee's comments pertaining to the value of the LTBP program's products and their potential impact on the bridge community. As we collect data in the long-term data collection phase or conduct studies in support of the LTBP program objectives, we will ensure that our stakeholders stay informed and can benefit from any findings or products through published materials, newsletters, the LTBP Web site, and via outreach activities. We also appreciate the Committee's comments about our efforts to draft a strategic plan for data analysis and collection. We will continue to coordinate with the Committee to develop this plan and accept the Committee's recommendation to refer to it as the LTBP Strategic Data Analysis and Collection plan.

The LTBP program was modeled after the Long-Term Pavement Performance (LTPP) program. We will continue to coordinate implementation of the two programs and take advantage of lessons learned from earlier LTPP efforts, as well as efficiencies in future data collection, storage, analysis and product development. As the Committee requested, we will provide an assessment of the impact its expert task groups (ETG) have had on the LTBP program.

The limited available resources and multiple programmatic activities were the main reasons for reducing our meeting schedule from two to one meeting per year. We will continue to support an open dialogue with the Committee through the regular meetings, as well as conference calls, online meetings, Webinars, reports, and reading materials. We agree with the Committee that

our interactions will improve through advance sharing of agendas, questions to discuss, and informational materials.

The FHWA has identified the number and location of bridges to assess within the Mid-Atlantic cluster starting in March 2013. We will accomplish this in cooperation with our partners from the States of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the District of Columbia, and our contractor, Rutgers University. We have identified the performance parameters to monitor on these bridges and will determine the appropriate tools to use for data collection. Also, we are currently meeting with the owners from the remaining 13 clusters to identify the number and location of bridges subject to detailed data collection and evaluation. We plan to modify and update the LTBP data collection and data analysis plans based on information obtained from these meetings. As requested, we will share this information with the Committee at the next conference call or Webinar.

The FHWA works across all research programs to make data and information available to other researchers and users as a method to improve truck-related data for the LTBP Program. To continue this effort, the LTBP Program will also study the feasibility of using various weigh-in-motion technologies for data collection to gain a greater understanding of the impact of trucks on bridge performance and deterioration.

The FHWA is working with all State departments of transportation to identify changes in bridge design and maintenance practices for each State beginning in 1960. We are also working with the steel and concrete bridge industries to identify changes in materials, coatings, and design standards and practices beginning in 1960. At our next meeting with the Committee, we will provide our findings about the need for a new material-related ETG and plan.

As we continue the bridge selection process for all 14 clusters, we will ask each State to identify bridges/routes that hydraulic fracturing impacts so that we can understand the national scope of the problem. Based on the identification of apparent widespread use of hydraulic fracturing, we will work to identify additional representative bridges to test and evaluate in those clusters, where appropriate, as resources become available.

Again, thanks to you and the members of your Committee for your support of the LTBP program. Should you have any questions regarding this response or the LTBP program, please feel free to contact Mr. Michael Trentacoste at (202) 493-3999, or Dr. Hamid Ghasemi at (202) 493-3042

Sincerely,



Victor M. Mendez
Administrator