



GEORGE M. BALD
Commissioner

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of RESOURCES and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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August 20, 2009

**Re: Letter of Support for TIGER Grant, Androscoggin Valley Consortium
Pavement Management Program**

I write in support of the Androscoggin Valley Consortium request for TIGER Grant funds to support the execution of an innovative pavement rehabilitation and management program in the economically disadvantaged region of northern New Hampshire. The City of Berlin, the Town of Gorham, the Town of Shelburne, the Town of Milan, and the Town of Colebrook have partnered with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to bring an integrated approach to restoring and maintaining connectivity in the region.

Prior to the recent economic downturn, the Androscoggin Valley was by far the most economically distressed region in the state due to the closing of the major pulp and paper mills. More recently, additional plants have closed including the recent shutdown of the Wausau pulp mill in Groveton and an Ethan Allan facility employing 500 hundred skilled workers. In July of this year, U.S. Department of Labor reported that New Hampshire was one of three small states to experience a statistically significant employment loss in June. The City of Berlin and the Town of Colebrook have the highest unemployment rates in the state.

A TIGER grant would create jobs to restore a key transportation network in the short term and establish a financially and environmentally sustainable program to maintain a network work of roads that are vital for current and new businesses in tourism and renewable energy in the region.

TIGER grant funds would provide resources needed to bring this network now in extremely poor condition to a state of good repair. Once restored and a pavement management program --- not just a plan --- is in place, the lifecycle costs of these facilities will be greatly reduced. The pavement program will position these communities to shift permanently from expensive capital construction programs to cost effective maintenance programs. The savings in debt service from one modest capital project could fund the maintenance of these roads. Without TIGER funds, the region will only be able to make spot repairs.

This road network is a perfect candidate for cutting edge rehabilitation techniques based on recycling crumbled asphalt. Recycled pavement applications pulverize pavement, process it on site, and replace it in the roadway. Not only are the needs for new petroleum and aggregate inputs reduced to almost nothing, but emissions from transportation are reduced as well.

This project is ready to go. A baseline engineering assessment establishing priorities for rehabilitation work and initial cost assessments and a regional funding plan are in place. Intensive rehabilitation can start at the beginning of next year's construction season.

I ask you to join me in supporting a TIGER discretionary grant to the City of Berlin on behalf of the Androscoggin Consortium for an integrated pavement maintenance and management program in the region. I commit to work with you to ensure this prime economic development opportunity for northern New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George M. Bald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

George M. Bald
Commissioner

GMB:lc