

Kip Harrington, Division Manager  
Department of Community Development  
Long Range Planning

Phone: 605-394-4120  
Email: kip.harrington@rcgov.org

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Metropolitan Planning Organization Committee Members

FROM: Kip Harrington, Division Manager

DATE: February 3, 2025

RE: **25TP003 – Letter of Support for FY 2025 South Dakota DOT Highway 44 PROTECT Grant Application**

The South Dakota Department of Transportation has submitted an application to the United States Department of Transportation PROTECT Grant program to reconstruct two bridges on SD Highway 44 west of Rapid City. The project's primary focus is to raise and reconstruct two bridges on Hwy 44 that have reached the end of their useful life. These structures can no longer safely withstand the increasingly extreme weather events that our region now faces.

This initiative is not only timely but essential for the safety of our community and the countless visitors who use this route. Hwy 44 serves as a main east-west route for accessing parks, resorts, and various tourist attractions in the Black Hills Area. The importance of this highway to our local economy and tourism industry cannot be overstated.

The comprehensive project will include approach grading for the new structures, installation of guardrails, surfacing improvements, new pavement markings, implementation of erosion control measures, and construction of a new ADA compliant pedestrian facilities. These improvements will significantly enhance the safety and functionality of this vital transportation corridor.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Letter of Support for FY 2025 South Dakota DOT Highway 44 PROTECT Grant Application**