

June 19, 2013

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Rahall:

The National Construction Alliance II (NCA II) strongly supports H.R. 2428, the Strengthen and Fortify Existing Bridges Act of 2013, legislation designed to help repair and replace the nation's faltering bridges. The NCA II – a partnership between two of the nation's leading construction unions, the International Union of Operating Engineers and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America – appreciates your leadership to address this critical problem facing the nation's transportation system.

The legislation authorizes \$2.75 billion in both fiscal year 2013 and fiscal year 2014 for states to rehabilitate and replace structurally deficient, functionally obsolete, and fracture-critical bridges. According to the Department of Transportation, there are currently 66,749 structurally deficient and 84,748 functionally obsolete U.S. bridges. This dramatic problem clearly demands a solution; H.R. 2428 is part of the answer.

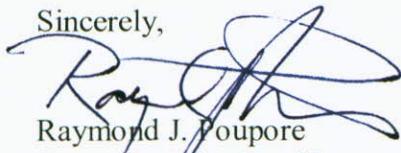
The I-5 Bridge that collapsed into the Skagit River in Washington State was rated as functionally obsolete and surpassed its 50-year expected lifespan. It is a stark example of the risk to public safety associated with the country's inadequate bridges. The bridge collapse also represents a serious economic problem. Now a key commercial artery of the national highway system, which links Canada to the Puget Sound and the rest of the transportation network, has been virtually severed, resulting in delays and inefficiencies in the movement of goods and people.

While many States have worked hard to reduce the backlog of deficient bridges, declining federal support for bridge infrastructure has significantly slowed their progress in recent years. H.R. 2428 will reverse this harmful trend, while improving safety and creating jobs.

The National Construction Alliance II supports the Strengthen and Fortify Existing Bridges Act of 2013 and looks forward to working with you to enact it into law in this session of Congress.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical safety and jobs issue.

Sincerely,



Raymond J. Poupore
Executive Vice President



UNITED BROTHERHOOD
of CARPENTERS & JOINERS
of AMERICA

Douglas J. McCarron
General President



INTERNATIONAL UNION
of OPERATING ENGINEERS

James T. Callahan
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