



**For Immediate Release**

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## **After federal grant disappointment, Highway 14 advocates call on Gov. Walz, Minnesota Legislature to fund project in 2020**

MANKATO, MINN.—After learning that expansion of Highway 14 from Nicollet to New Ulm was not among the projects selected for federal funding by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Highway 14 advocates are renewing their call on Governor Tim Walz and the Minnesota Legislature to fund the project in 2020.

“We are disappointed that Highway 14 was not selected for a federal BUILD Grant, but this latest setback only reinforces the importance of the 2020 legislative session,” said Karen Foreman, president of the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership and a member of the Mankato City Council.

Over the summer, the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to apply for a \$25 million grant through USDOT’s Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program. Had Highway 14 been selected for the federal funding, MnDOT would have committed more the \$60 million in state funds to help make the project a reality, with Nicollet County also planning to contribute to the project.

The 12 miles between Nicollet and New Ulm is the final stretch of Highway 14 that remains unfunded in the more than 100 miles between New Ulm and Rochester. On November 1, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for an expansion project on 12 miles of highway between Owatonna and Dodge Center, a long-awaited project funded by the Legislature in 2018.

“We have made huge progress on Highway 14 safety and expansion in recent years, but only when legislators from both parties have come together to put safety over politics,” Foreman said. “We call on Governor Walz and the Legislature to find a way to finish this final phase of Highway 14 expansion so that we can finally drive on four lanes all the way from New Ulm to Rochester.”

Despite the disappointing outcome of the federal grant selection, Foreman expressed gratitude for the legions of Highway 14 supporters who launched an aggressive campaign aimed at boosting the project’s chances of obtaining a BUILD grant.

“On behalf of the Highway 14 Partnership, I extend my sincere gratitude for the hundreds of individuals, businesses and local governments who wrote letters in support of Highway 14’s bid for federal funding. I also thank the MnDOT officials who worked tirelessly to craft the BUILD Grant application.”

Foreman added, “With the 2020 Legislature expected to consider a sizable state bonding package, we ask all of our partners to now direct their passion and energy toward the Governor and state legislators.”

*The U.S. Highway 14 Partnership is an advocacy organization supporting the four-lane expansion of Highway 14. Formed in 1998, the Highway 14 Partnership includes local governments, private businesses and other organizations across southern Minnesota. Follow the U.S. Highway 14 online at [ushighway14.com](http://ushighway14.com) on Twitter at [@Hwy14Pshp](https://twitter.com/Hwy14Pshp).*

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For additional information regarding BUILD Grant awards, see below from the USDOT:

USDOT release: <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>

List: <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/subdoc/901/build-fact-sheet2019-final.pdf>

Map: <https://www.transportation.gov/policy-initiatives/build/build-grants-2019-awarded-projects>