



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02133-1054

January 17, 2022

Secretary Gina Fiandaca
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Street - Suite 4160
Boston Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Fiandaca:

We are writing to you today on behalf of the Lowell legislative delegation regarding the current surface conditions on the temporary Rourke Bridge in the City of Lowell, Massachusetts. Current conditions necessitate immediate attention, as the steel plates on the bridge need to be once again resurfaced with the requisite epoxy and stone mixture similar to the work performed in previous years of 2008 and 2014.

While there is a new replacement bridge currently under design, it is our responsibility to provide safe passage while it is still operational. This 'temporary bridge' will continue to remain open during the many years of construction, which is slated to begin in 2025 and finish in 2028, according to the latest MA DOT Working Group update last February.

Most, if not all, of the steel plates now show significant signs of surface degradation. A majority of the travel surface exhibits extensive erosion of the asphalt adhesive and exposure of the steel deck panels. I travel this bridge multiple times daily, and we are concerned with the safety of the bridge deck for our constituents, which place motorists in unsafe situations, particularly when it rains or snows. The exposed steel plates are creating dangerous and potentially hazardous driving conditions.

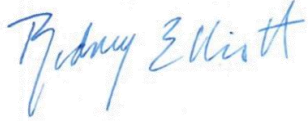
In addition to daily traffic, this bridge is one of the main points of access used by emergency vehicles delivering patients to Lowell General Hospital. School busses traverse this bridge numerous times per day and is constitutently used by our police and fire departments.

The Rourke Bridge carries 27,000 cars per day back and forth. The State cannot forgo maintenance simply because another bridge is planned. There are many years to go before a permanent replacement bridge is constructed and operational. The plates on the current bridge are already a hazard. We can't imagine their condition in another five years. It is vitally important that measures be taken to ensure safe passage for all travelers over this bridge until the permanent structure is complete.

We thank you and respectfully request your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Please feel free to contact the office of Representative Rodney Elliott if you have any questions.

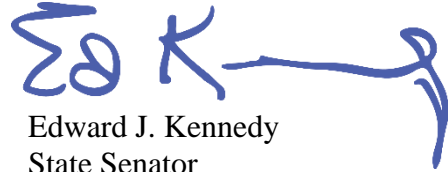
Sincerely,



Rodney Elliott
State Representative
16th Middlesex District



Vanna Howard
State Representative
17th Middlesex District



Edward J. Kennedy
State Senator
First Middlesex District