

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 8

Joint resolution urging U.S. Representative Peter Welch to propose the Vilas Bridge as one of his congressional community project requests and that Congress appropriate funds for this request

Offered by: Representatives Goldman of Rockingham and Partridge of Windham

Whereas, in the early 1930s, the Charles N. Vilas Bridge (Vilas Bridge), which connects the Village of Bellows Falls in Rockingham, Vermont, and the Town of Walpole, New Hampshire, was opened at the location where in the 18th century the first-ever bridge to cross the Connecticut River was built, and

Whereas, because the Vilas Bridge spans the Connecticut River, the state of New Hampshire is its primary owner, and

Whereas, on March 19, 2009, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation closed the Vilas Bridge to all pedestrians and road traffic due to major deterioration, causing a significant drop in business, according to businesses in the Village of Bellows Falls, and

Whereas, in 2013, the State of Vermont, through the Vermont Agency of Transportation, offered to fund the entire cost of the Vilas Bridge rehabilitation in exchange for the state of New Hampshire's financing Vermont's portion of other future transportation infrastructure repairs, and

Whereas, in January 2020, the Village of Bellows Falls and the Towns of Rockingham and Walpole sent a letter to Vermont Governor Philip B. Scott and New Hampshire Governor Christopher T. Sununu noting that the Vilas Bridge is a vital economic link between these communities and is essential to Walpole's wastewater treatment infrastructure and requesting that the two governors work to move this bridge restoration project forward, and

Whereas, rehabilitation of the Vilas Bridge is included in New Hampshire's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) but construction is not scheduled to start until 2028, and

Whereas, in the summer of 2021, the New Arch Bridge, which is a mile upstream from the Vilas Bridge and is an alternative travel route, will be partially closed for reconstruction, and

Whereas, the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations is currently accepting member requests for financing community projects, and according to federal guidance, highway capital projects described under 23 U.S.C. § 133(b) are eligible as a community project request, and inclusion in a STIP satisfies the requirement that a highway capital project have the support of the state government that would administer the project, and

Whereas, on March 30, 2021, the Rockingham Selectboard and the Bellows Falls Village Trustees jointly approved a resolution authorizing U.S. Representative Peter Welch to submit the Vilas Bridge community project request of \$11,000,000.00 for consideration by the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly urges U.S. Representative Peter Welch to propose the Vilas Bridge as one of his congressional community project requests and that Congress appropriate funds for this request, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the New Hampshire and Vermont Congressional Delegations.