



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

March 3, 2015

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
State Capitol, Second Floor
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Joan McDonald, Commissioner
NYS Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12232

Hon. Dean G. Skelos
Senate Temporary President & Majority Leader
Senate Coalition Co-Leader
Room 330 Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Room 932
LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Jeffrey A. Klein
IDC Conference Leader
Senate Coalition Co-Leader
Room 913 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Democratic Conference Leader
Room 907
LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Brian Kolb
Assembly Minority Conference Leader
Room 933 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Joseph Morelle
Assembly Majority Leader
Room 926 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Joseph E. Robach, Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
Room 803 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. David Gantt, Chair
Assembly Transportation Committee
Room 830 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Cuomo and Legislative Leaders:

As we have for the past two years, we once again appreciate and welcome the opportunity to contact you on behalf of local transportation leaders and municipalities, from throughout our respective legislative districts and across New York State, concerning our local roads, bridges and culverts.

One of the true highlights of each of the last two enacted state budgets was an achievement that has made a great difference for so many communities, economies and motorists statewide: the much-needed and long-overdue increase in state funding for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) which, last year, was combined with the Winter Recovery funding distributed through the CHIPS formula.

We continue to value your commitment and leadership on this important issue. Looking ahead to the 2015-16 budget negotiations, we believe it is critically important to build on our recent successes and renew our commitment to addressing the tremendous, unmet needs and challenges facing our local roads, bridges and culverts in every region across New York State.

We believe an even stronger commitment in this year's final budget to our locally maintained transportation infrastructure is not only feasible and justified, but also imperative to realizing our shared economic, fiscal and community development goals.

Therefore, we are again proudly joining with our local leaders to urge you to support a multi-year strategy to address local infrastructure needs in order to help provide our citizens, local property taxpayers, tourists and motorists with the kind of local transportation system they need and deserve.

First, we are seeking a \$200-million increase to the CHIPS program to bring total state aid to \$638.1 million. This proposed funding would restore the \$40 million in Winter Recovery funds that are eliminated in this year's Executive Budget to the CHIPS base, and provide for an additional \$160-million increase to the base aid to help meet the increasing infrastructure needs of our local communities.

Secondly, with the state facing an estimated \$5.4-billion infusion of bank settlement funds, we believe this unanticipated surplus provides a tremendous opportunity for New York State to undertake a multi-year "State Aid to Local Roads, Bridges and Culvert Program," distributed through the CHIPS formula. Specifically, we are seeking a five-year, \$500-million commitment (\$100 million per year) to be distributed directly through the CHIPS formula to ensure that every taxpayer, every community and every region from across our state benefits from these settlement funds. Distributing these funds through the CHIPS formula, we believe, now has precedent since it was used to provide "Winter Recovery" funds to address local infrastructure in the 2014-15 state budget.

We strongly believe there's an unprecedented opportunity to work within the context of this year's budget proposal to readily meet this commitment to our local roads, bridges and culverts without increasing overall state spending. Whether it be through the utilization of the \$5.4-billion "settlement surplus," the Department of Transportation's (DOT) five-year, \$750-million capital plan for state and local bridges, or even the \$50 million proposed to purchase new snow plows for the state, all of these sources provide opportunities to meet the urgent needs of our local infrastructure.

Equally important, we believe we can and we should share a portion of this unparalleled infrastructure commitment with our local municipalities through the CHIPS formula to provide

the flexibility and funding they need to meet their growing and challenging infrastructure demands.

It's simply the right thing to do and we believe there's a compelling case for New York State to take these proposed steps to address these urgent local transportation and infrastructure shortcomings. Consider that:

- Local governments are responsible for maintaining nearly 87 percent of the roads in New York State, and one-half of the state's 18,000 bridges;
- Drivers on local roads contribute nearly half of the gas taxes collected in New York State;
- 48 percent of the vehicle miles traveled in New York are on local roads, yet less than 12 percent of the taxes and fees paid to the state by these drivers go back to maintaining local roads;
- Local highway departments continue to struggle from substantial losses (as much as 40%) in federal highway aid as a result of changes to the federal transportation program;
- In 2012, the state-owned system benefited from a \$1-billion accelerated bridge and pavement program – a program credited with improving or replacing more than 100 bridges and repairing 2,000 miles of state-owned roads, among other public works projects. A similar state investment must now be given to our local needs, particularly for critical pavement, bridge and culvert work;
- Estimates by the State Comptroller, state DOT and other independent studies show a large number of local road mileage deteriorating and many local bridges rated structurally deficient or functionally obsolete;
- 32 percent of bridges are deficient and 40 percent of road pavements are rated fair or poor, and getting worse;
- Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost New York motorists an additional \$20.3 billion statewide annually – nearly \$2,300 per driver in some areas – due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic accidents and congestion-related delays;
- This past year there was more than a 25-percent increase in statewide salt contract prices, which will have a detrimental impact not only on many snow and ice budgets but on overall local highway maintenance budgets as well;
- Although much has been mentioned about choosing projects that have a statewide economic development impact, we contend that businesses locate in towns, villages and cities and it is equally important to ensure local roads and bridges are maintained to spur economic development and job creation while helping to control property taxes for individuals and businesses in local communities;

- Our nationally and internationally recognized agriculture and tourism industries are equally dependent upon a well-maintained and viable local infrastructure. Going from a well-conditioned state road to a deteriorating local road or deficient bridge does not send the right message to our local visitors and farmers;

- Locally administered highway projects will result in business for local contractors and work crews that will provide local employment and economic opportunities;

- The State Comptroller further estimates there will be \$89 billion in unmet local infrastructure needs over the next 20 years, with much of this shortfall on the already deteriorating local transportation system; and

- According to an analysis by the NYS Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, the local highway system faces an annual funding gap of \$1.3 billion. Adding to the alarming urgency of all of the above, we also have to recognize that local governments continue to struggle to address budgetary demands in the face of the state-imposed property tax cap and freeze, rising pension and healthcare costs, unfunded state mandates, and stagnant Aid to Municipalities (AIM). This clearly demonstrates the incredible challenge facing our local municipalities to meet the critical investment level needed to improve local roads, bridges and culverts. A stronger state-local partnership is the only answer.

In closing, we believe the 2015-2016 New York State budget provides a tremendous, unprecedented opportunity to finally transform this critical sector of the state-local partnership. The commitment and investment we are seeking, through the CHIPS formula, will build on the foundation we have successfully made in the last two state budgets and further solidify our fundamental belief that “local roads matter.”

With the renewed, vigorous state investment we have outlined, we will finally move toward the safe and reliable local infrastructure we envision, an infrastructure that will serve as the catalyst for future economic development and job creation throughout local communities.

As always, thank you for your thoughtful consideration. We look forward to working with you once again to achieve these critical goals and thereby make the 2015-16 New York State budget truly transformative for our local transportation system.

Sincerely,



Senator Thomas F. O'Mara
58th Senate District



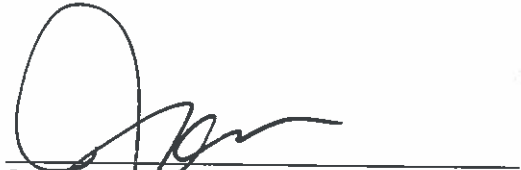
Assemblyman Philip A. Palmesano
132nd Assembly District




Senator Thomas F. O'Mara, SD 58



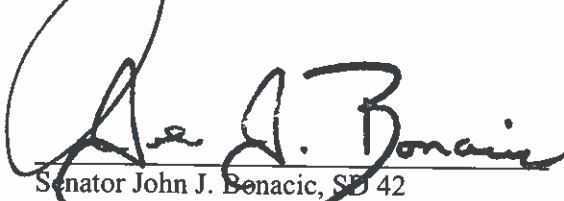
Assemblyman Philip A. Palmesano, AD 132



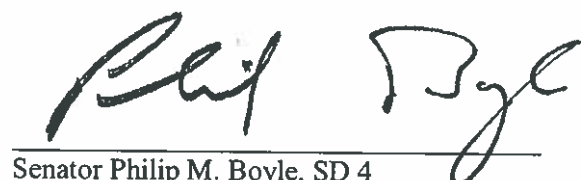
Senator Joseph E. Robach, SD 56



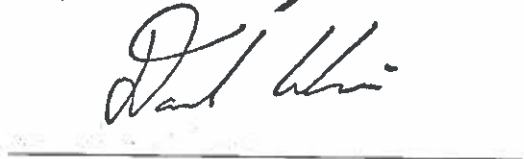
Senator George A. Amedore, Jr., SD 46



Senator John J. Bonacic, SD 42



Senator Philip M. Boyle, SD 4



Senator David Carlucci, SD 38




Senator Thomas D. Croci, SD 3



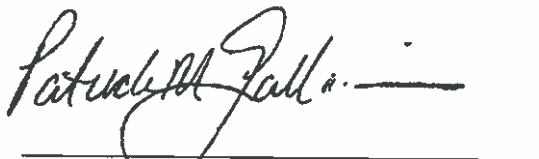
Senator Hugh T. Farley, SD 49



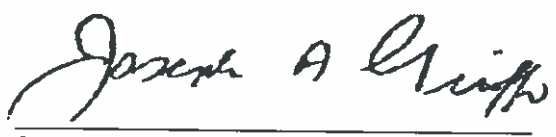
Senator Simcha Felder, SD 17



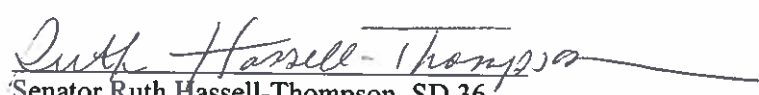
Senator Rich Funke, SD 55



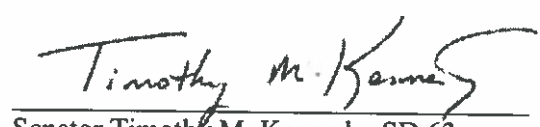
Senator Patrick M. Gallivan, SD 59



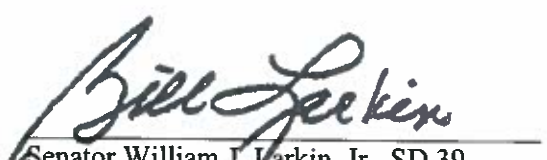
Senator Joseph A. Griffo, SD 47



Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, SD 36



Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, SD 63



Senator William J. Varkin, Jr., SD 39



Senator George S. Latimer, SD 37



Senator Kathleen A. Marchione, SD 43



Dr. Terrence P. Murphy, SD 40



Senator Michael F. Nozzolio, SD 54



Senator Robert G. Ort, SD 62



Senator Kevin S. Parker, SD 21



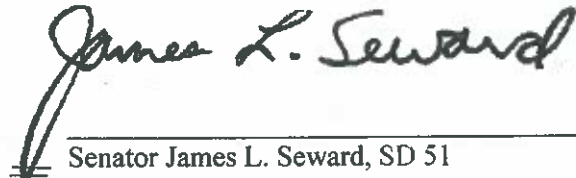
Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer, SD 61



Senator Patricia A. Ritchie, SD 48



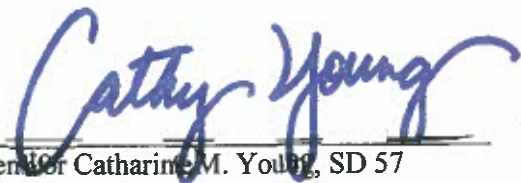
Senator Susan J. Serino, SD 41



Senator James L. Seward, SD 51



Senator David J. Valesky, SD 53



Senator Catharine M. Young, SD 57



Senator Elizabeth Little, SD 45

cc:

William Mulrow, Secretary to the Governor

Joseph Percoco, Executive Deputy Secretary to the Governor

Jim Malatras, Director of State Operations

Karen Rae, Deputy Secretary for Transportation

CHIPS/BRIDGE FUNDING LETTER



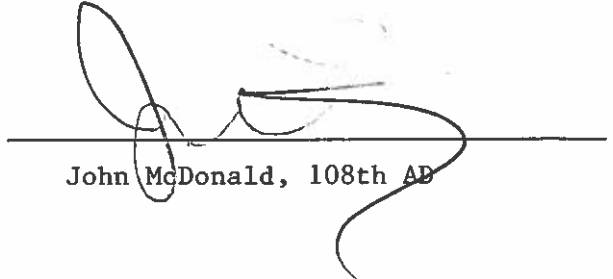
Michael Kearns, 142nd AD



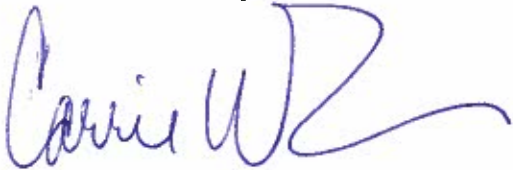
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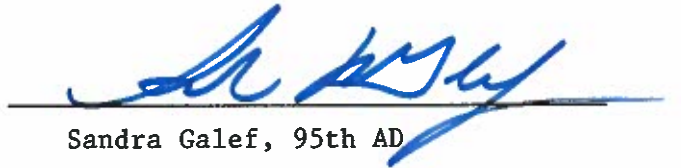
Robin Schimminger, 140th AD



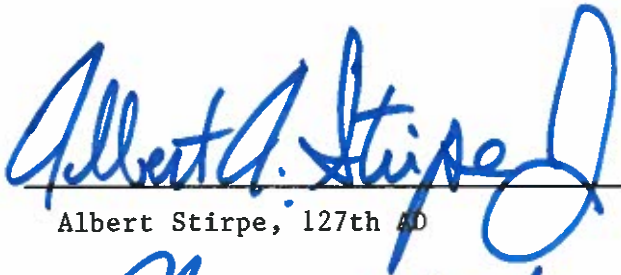
John McDonald, 108th AD



Carrie Woerner, 113th AD



Sandra Galef, 95th AD



Albert Stirpe, 127th AD



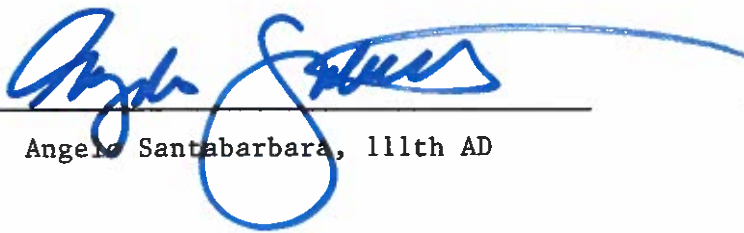
Fred Thiele, 1st AD



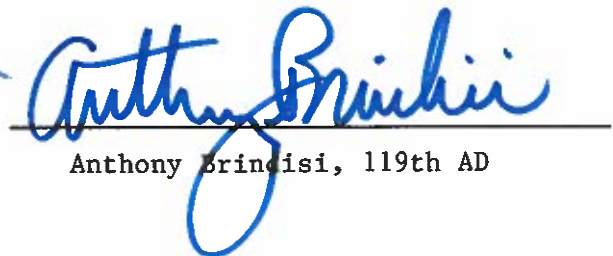
Phillip Steck, 110th AD



Joseph Lentol, 50th AD



Angela Santabarbara, 111th AD

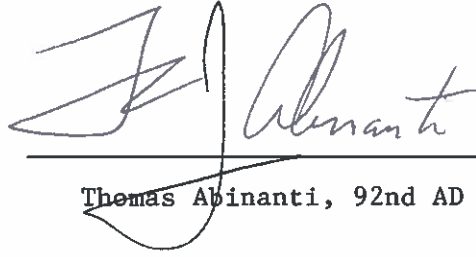


Anthony Brincisi, 119th AD

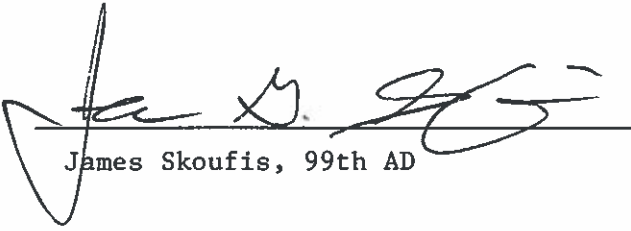
CHIPS/BRIDGE FUNDING LETTER



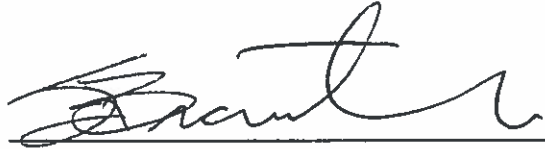
William Magee, 121st AD



Thomas Abinanti, 92nd AD



James Skoufis, 99th AD



Edward Braunstein, 26th AD



Andrew Hevesi, 28th AD



Ron Kim, 40th AD



Marcos Crespo, 85th AD



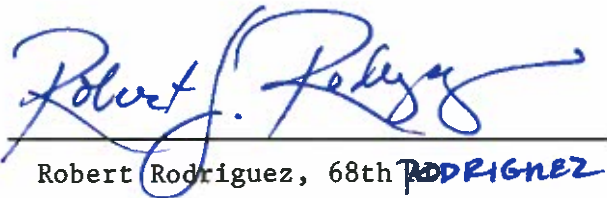
Samuel Roberts, 128th AD



Donna Lupardo, 123rd AD



Steve Englebright, 4th AD



RODRIGUEZ

Robert Rodriguez, 68th AD

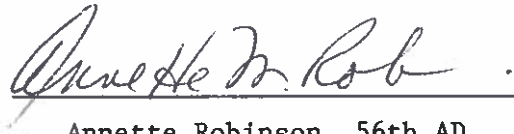


Felix Ortiz, 51st AD

CHIPS/BRIDGE FUNDING LETTER



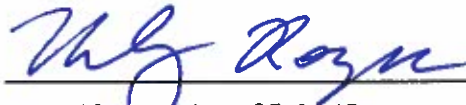
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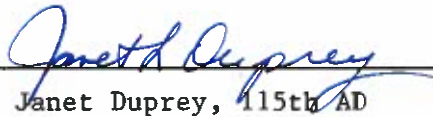
Annette Robinson, 56th AD



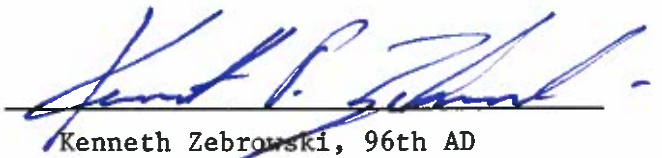
Christopher Friend, 124th AD



Nily Rozic, 25th AD



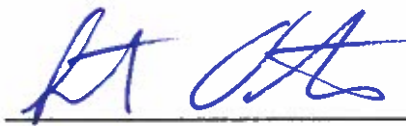
Janet Duprey, 115th AD



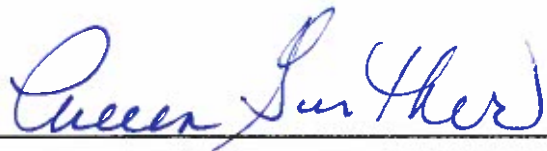
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Amy Paulin, 88th AD



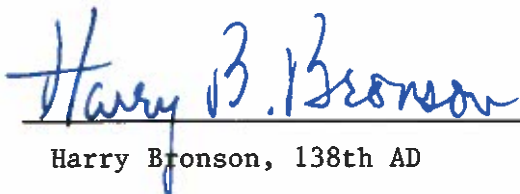
Steven Otis, 91st AD



Aileen Gunther, 100th AD



James Brennan, 44th AD

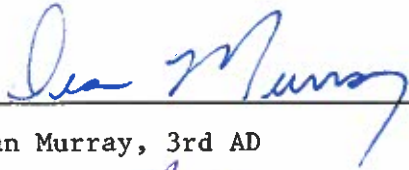


Harry Bronson, 138th AD

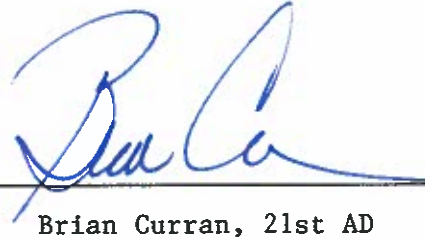


Charles Lavine, 13th AD

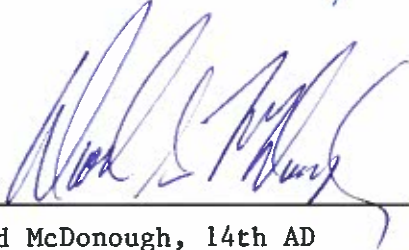
CHIPS/BRIDGE FUNDING LETTER



Dean Murray, 3rd AD



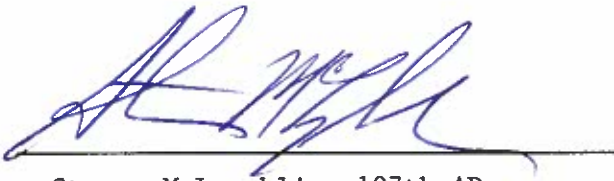
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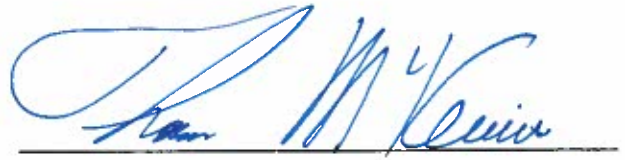
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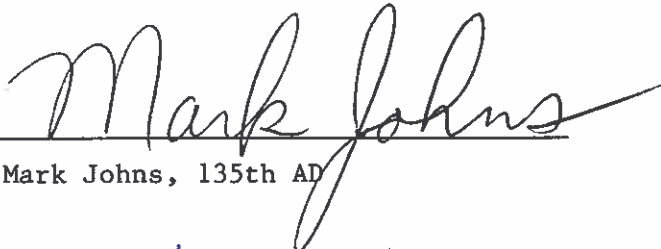
Michael Montesano, 15th AD



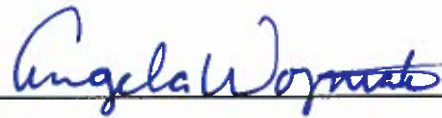
Steven McLaughlin, 107th AD



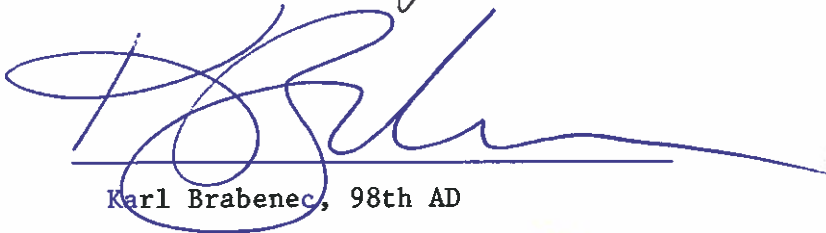
Thomas McKeivitt, 17th AD



Mark Johns, 135th AD



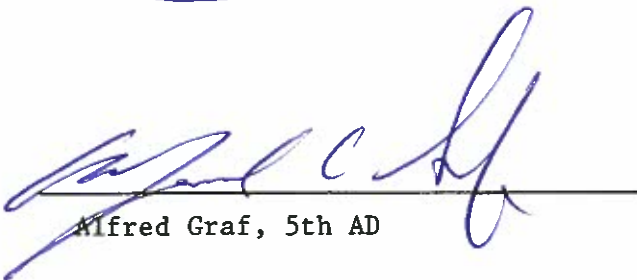
Angela Wozniak, 143rd AD



Karl Brabenec, 98th AD



David DiPietro, 147th AD



Alfred Graf, 5th AD



Bill Nojay, 133rd AD

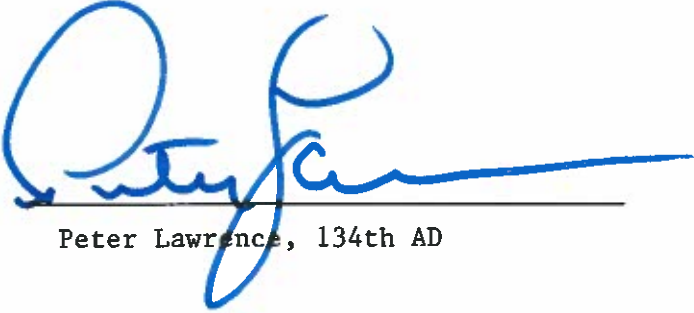
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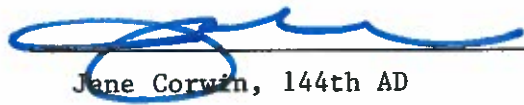
Kieran Lalor, 105th AD



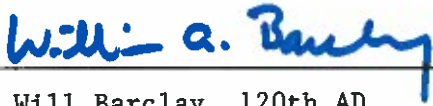
Kenneth Blankenbush, 117th AD



Peter Lawrence, 134th AD



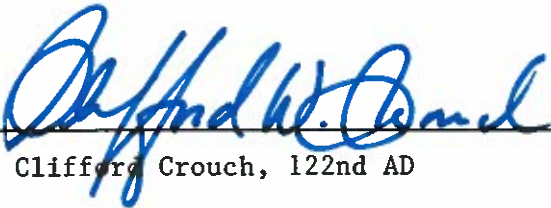
Jane Corwin, 144th AD



Will Barclay, 120th AD



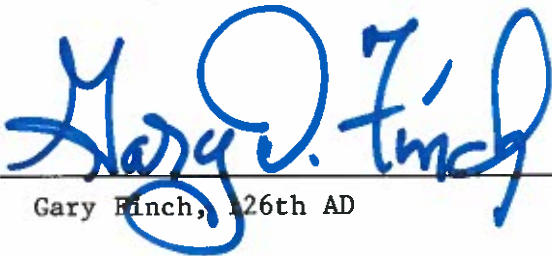
John Ceretto, 145th AD



Clifford Crouch, 122nd AD

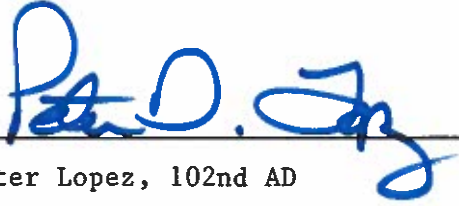


Nicole Malliotakis, 64th AD

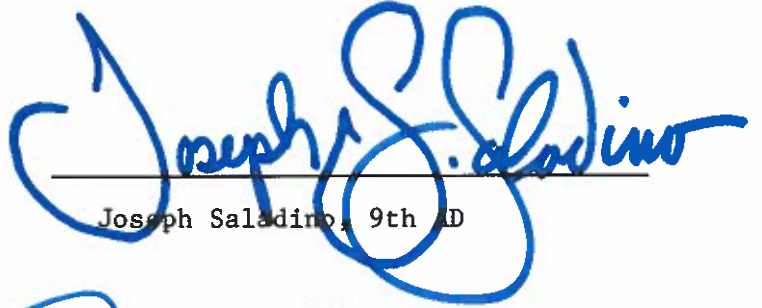


Gary Finch, 126th AD

CHIPS/BRIDGE FUNDING LETTER



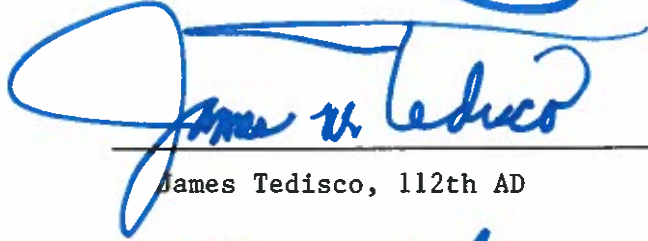
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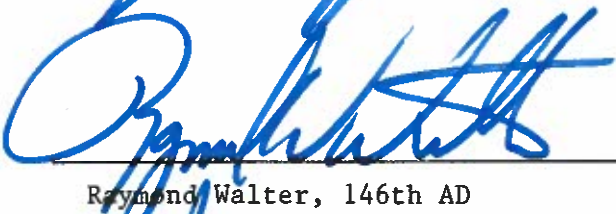
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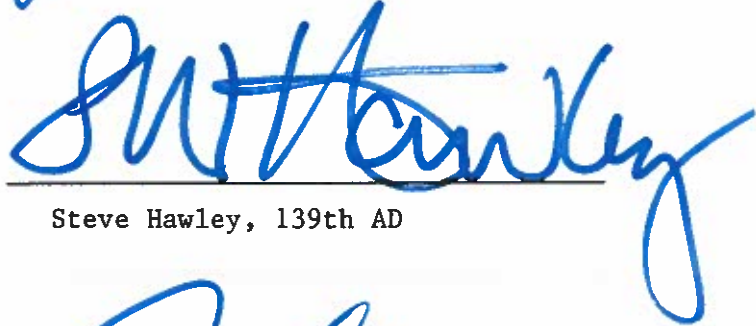
Stephen Katz, 94th AD



James Tedisco, 112th AD



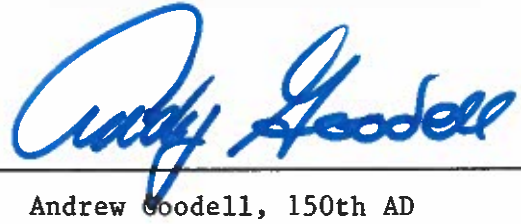
Raymond Walter, 146th AD



Steve Hawley, 139th AD



Marc Butler, 118th AD



Andrew Goodell, 150th AD



Daniel Stec, 114th AD

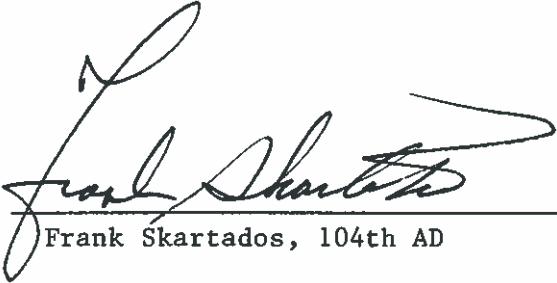
CHIPS/BRIDGE FUNDING LETTER



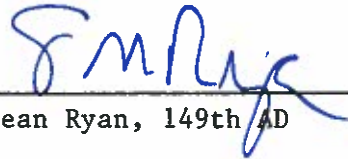
Shelley Mayer, 90th AD



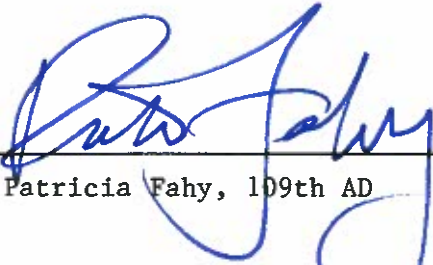
Michael DenDekker, 34th AD



Frank Skartados, 104th AD



Sean Ryan, 149th AD



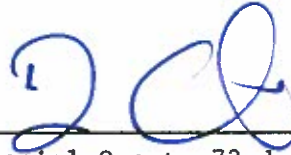
Patricia Fahy, 109th AD



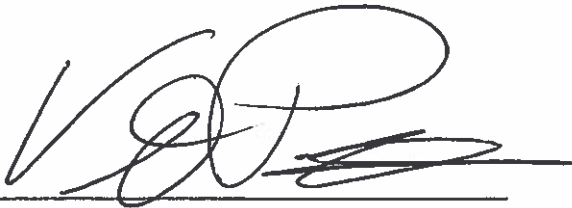
Didi Barrett, 106th AD



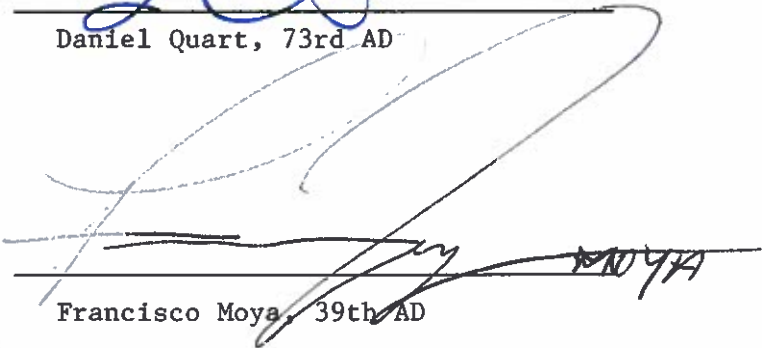
Robert Oaks, 130th AD



Daniel Quart, 73rd AD

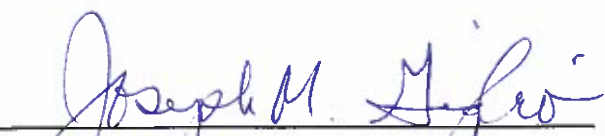


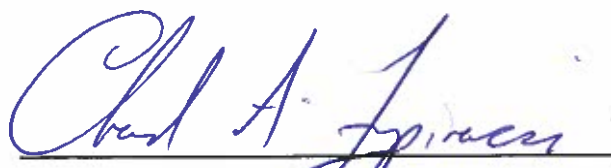
Victor Pichardo, 86th AD




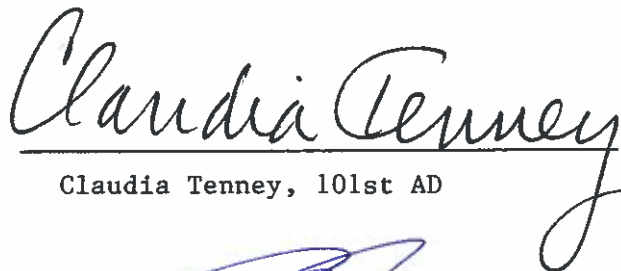
Francisco Moya, 39th AD


CHIPS/BRIDGE FUNDING LETTER

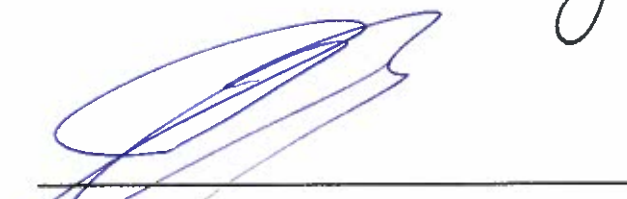

Joseph Giglio, 148th AD



Chad Lupinacci, 10th AD

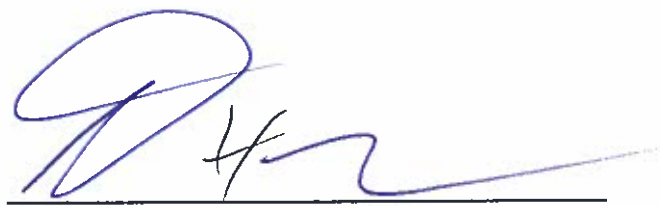

Andrew Raia, 12th AD



Claudia Tenney, 101st AD


Edward Ra, 19th AD


Joseph Borelli, 62nd AD


Michael Fitzpatrick, 8th AD


Anthony Palumbo, 2nd AD


Andrew Garbarino, 7th AD

