To require that certain aspects of bridge projects be carried out by certified contractors, and for other purposes.

__A BILL__

To require that certain aspects of bridge projects be carried out by certified contractors, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Bridge Corrosion Prevention and Repair Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. CORROSION PREVENTION FOR BRIDGES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPLICABLE BRIDGE PROJECT.—The term “applicable bridge project” means a project for construction, replacement, rehabilitation, preservation,
or protection, other than de minimis work, as determined by the entity carrying out the project, on—

(A) a bridge project that receives financial assistance under title 23, United States Code; or

(B) a project for a railroad bridge (as defined in section 237.5 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations)) that receives financial assistance under title 49, United States Code.

(2) CERTIFIED CONTRACTOR.—The term “certified contractor” means a contracting or subcontracting firm that has been certified by a third-party organization recognized industry-wide that evaluates the capability of the contractor or subcontractor to properly perform 1 or more specified aspects of an applicable bridge project described in subsection (b)(2).

(3) QUALIFIED TRAINING PROGRAM.—The term “qualified training program” means a training program in corrosion control, mitigation, and prevention that is—

(A) offered by an organization that provides trainees with a certification that meets the ANSI/NACE Number 13/SSPC–ACS–1
standard (or a successor standard) or another
standard approved by the Administrator of the
Federal Highway Administration; or

(B) an industrial coatings applicator train-
ing program—

(i) registered under the Act of August
16, 1937 (commonly known as the “Na-
tional Apprenticeship Act”) (50 Stat. 664,
chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.); and

(ii) that meets the standards of sub-
part A of part 29 and part 30 of title 29,
Code of Federal Regulations (or successor
regulations).

(b) APPLICABLE BRIDGE PROJECTS.—

(1) QUALITY CONTROL.—A certified contractor
shall carry out aspects of an applicable bridge
project described in paragraph (2).

(2) ASPECTS OF APPLICABLE BRIDGE
PROJECTS.—Aspects of an applicable bridge project
referred to in paragraph (1) include—

(A) surface preparation or coating applica-
tion on steel, concrete, or rebar of an applicable
bridge project;
(B) removal of a lead-based or other hazardous coating from steel or concrete of an existing applicable bridge project; and

(C) shop painting of structural steel or rebar fabricated for installation on an applicable bridge project.

(3) CORROSION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.—In carrying out an applicable bridge project, the entity carrying out the project shall—

(A) implement a corrosion management system that utilizes industry-recognized standards and corrosion mitigation and prevention methods to address different considerations, including—

(i) surface preparation;

(ii) protective coatings;

(iii) materials selection;

(iv) cathodic protection;

(v) corrosion engineering;

(vi) personnel training; and

(vii) best practices in environmental protection to prevent environmental degradation and uphold public health; and

(B) require certified contractors, for the purpose of carrying out aspects of applicable
bridge projects described in paragraph (2), to employ a substantial number of individuals that are trained and certified by a qualified training program.

(4) CERTIFICATION.—For an applicable bridge project that includes an aspect described in paragraph (2), the entity carrying out the project shall only accept bids from a certified contractor that presents written proof that the certification of the contractor meets the relevant SSPC–QP standards (or a successor standard).

(c) TRAINING PROGRAM.—As a condition of entering into a contract for an applicable bridge project, each certified contractor shall provide training for each individual who is not a certified coating applicator but that the certified contractor employs to carry out aspects of applicable bridge projects described in subsection (b)(2).

SEC. 3. AVAILABILITY OF FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING FOR CORROSION CONTROL WORK ON RAIL BRIDGES.

Section 22402(b)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E), by striking “or” at the end;
(2) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as sub-
paragraph (G); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the fol-
lowing:

“(F) to perform corrosion control work on
rail bridges; or”.

SEC. 4. STUDY ON EFFICACY OF WEATHERING STEEL.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) weathering steel is often used for bridge
construction projects because of its ability to with-
stand weather conditions better than other forms of
steel;

(2) the recent collapse of the Fern Hollow
Bridge in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in January
2022 highlights the real threat that corrosion poses
to the bridges of the United States;

(3) more research is needed into the
vulnerabilities of weathering steel; and

(4) States and units of local government need
more information on when and how to address the
risk of corrosion to weathering steel.

(b) STUDY.—Not later than 18 months after the date
of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation
shall—

(1) carry out a study on best practices for—
(A) the frequency and method of inspecting corrosion on weathering steel bridges; and

(B) addressing corrosion on weathering steel bridges;

(2) submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report on the results of the study under paragraph (1); and

(3) make the report under paragraph (2) available to State departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations (as defined in section 134(b) of title 23, United States Code), regional transportation planning organizations (as defined in that section), and units of local government that own bridge assets.