



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

August 30, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

It is with great pleasure that I submit this letter in support of the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) application for funding through the FY2022 Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program. If granted, this funding would be used towards the construction of a replacement ferry for the 35-year-old *Margaret Chase Smith*.

The *Margaret Chase Smith* provides vehicle and passenger ferry service to the community of Islesboro, Maine, a rural community located three miles from the mainland in upper Penobscot Bay. Out of the six island communities the Maine State Ferry System (MSFS's) services, the Islesboro route is the most-traveled.

As the only means of public transportation to and from Islesboro, and the only way for vehicles to travel on and off the island, the ferry provides a crucial link for residents and visitors. Islesboro has roughly 600 year-round residents, with a summer population of over 2,000. The island depends on reliable, sustainable ferry service for access to schools, jobs and services, as well as for emergency medical transport. The replacement of the current vessel is critical to maintaining safe, reliable ferry service to Islesboro.

I am pleased that the new vessel will be designed with hybrid-electric propulsion technologies to operate with low to zero emissions. An important focus of my administration has been setting forth plans to combat climate change and this project is in alignment with the state's electric vehicle and transportation emissions-reduction goals. I applaud both the MSFS and MaineDOT for prioritizing this project.

I strongly support MaineDOT's request for funding through this program. Please do not hesitate to contact myself, or MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note, with any questions.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills
Governor



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