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August 25, 2022

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

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Federal Transit Administration FY2022 Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program

Dear U.S. Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of the Maine State Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) submission for the FY2022 Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program for funding to construction a replacement for our current ferry, the *Margaret Chase Smith*.

I am a resident of Islesboro, an island 3.4 miles off the mainland in Penobscot Bay. We have approximately 600 full time residents. Our population grows exponentially during the summer months.

During the summer, our morning ferry runs are filled with contractors and service providers, as well as USPS, UPS, and local building delivery services. The ferry carries cement trucks. Truck traffic is regular and heavy, as we have no gravel pit on the island. All our fuel arrives via the ferry. Residents of the island regularly use the ferry service for food shopping (the island has only two grocery stores), medical appointments, medication pick up (we have a health center but no pharmacy), veterinary services, hardware and building supplies and general shopping. The ferry also provides, when necessary, EMS services and spends the night here on the island in the event of medical emergencies.

I currently serve, at the request of the Islesboro Select Board, as the Islesboro representative on the Maine State Ferry Service Advisory Board. I according now know more about the MSFS, and ferry services in general, than I ever thought I would or, for that matter, wanted to know.

August 25, 2021

Our current ferry, the *Margaret Chase Smith*, was built in 1987, when Ronald Reagan was president. Robert Byrd had just taken over from Bob Dole as the Senate Majority leader. Tip O'Neil had just retired as Speaker of the House. Our vessel is well overdue for replacement.

In anticipation of a new vessel on Islesboro, we circulated a questionnaire to our residents last fall regarding, among other things, what people would like to see in a new vessel. After parking configuration (a current issue for a number of users), the most interest generated by the questionnaire involved the respondents' interest in clean, alternative, energy, primarily an electric powered vessel.

Our Select Board communicated the survey results to the Maine State Ferry Service back in December 9, 2021. A copy of that letter is attached for your department's review. In response, the MSFS has advised us that it is in essential agreement with that communication.

Our understanding is that the new vessel will be designed with electric propulsion as a primary system or hybrid, if necessary (depending upon infrastructure and expense issues). This approach is also supported by Maine's electric vehicle and transportation emissions-reduction goals. As noted in the letter of December 9, 2021, the town is entirely in favor of this plan.

Indeed, I consider this an exciting opportunity. The United States, regrettably, is well behind the eight ball when it comes to alternative source of ferry propulsion. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland are miles ahead of us and we need to rectify that situation; the sooner the better.

Accordingly, I support MaineDOT's proposal for the Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program. Funding this project would allow for the construction of a new vessel that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve ferry service and provide better access to work, education, and general services through safe, reliable, and affordable public transportation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John H. King", is written over a rectangular stamp area.

John H. King

Jhk/hal
Attachment (12/9/21 Ltr. To MSFS)