

August 29, 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:

The Nature Conservancy in Maine is pleased to express our strong support of the Maine State Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) submission for the FY2022 Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program for funding to construct a replacement ferry for the *Margaret Chase Smith*.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together.

The new vessel will replace the aging *Margaret Chase Smith*, which provides vehicle and passenger ferry service between Lincolnville and Islesboro, Maine State Ferry System's (MSFS's) most-traveled route. As the only means of public transportation to and from Islesboro, and the only way for vehicles to travel on and off Islesboro, the ferry provides a crucial link for island residents and visitors. The island depends on reliable, sustainable ferry service for access to jobs and services, as well as for emergency medical transport. Replacement of the current vessel is key to maintaining safe, reliable ferry service to Islesboro.

Our organization has been involved in developing Maine's climate goals for many years, including serving on the Maine Climate Council and co-leading its Transportation working group alongside Maine DOT. Maine's four-year Climate Action Plan, *Maine Won't Wait* calls for a variety of strategies to reduce carbon emissions. We are especially pleased that the new vessel will be designed with electric or hybrid propulsion, based upon public input and in alignment with the state's electric vehicle and transportation emissions-reduction goals.



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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rob Wood".

Rob Wood
Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy
The Nature Conservancy in Maine