



# Friends of Casco Bay

## Casco BAYKEEPER

April 18, 2023

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

Re: Friends of Casco Bay Support for Maine DOT and Portland Harbor  
Commission Application for Port Infrastructure Development Grant

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Friends of Casco Bay supports the above application for a Port Infrastructure Development Grant to dredge Portland Harbor and construct a CAD Cell to encapsulate contaminated sediment. For over 30 years, Friends of Casco Bay has worked to improve and protect the health of Casco Bay and its watershed. While most letters of support will focus on the significant economic impact the dredge will have for Portland and South Portland, we focus on this unprecedented opportunity to remove legacy contaminants from the harbor to improve benthic habitat. The timing of the dredge coincides with significant efforts by both cities to reduce stormwater and CSO pollution to the harbor.

The dredge will remove toxic sediments around wharves that have accumulated for over seven decades. We have analyzed the data collected to date and believe that most of these toxins were discharged by industries that populated the wharves prior to the advent of the Clean Water Act. The remainder of contaminants likely comes from more recent combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and stormwater discharges. Because the cities are aggressively working to reduce stormwater and CSO pollution, now is an ideal time to dredge the toxic sediments from the harbor to forever improve benthic habitat and public recreation.

With respect to the proposed dredge, we have worked with both cities and with the Portland Harbor Commission. These entities sought input from diverse stakeholders, including us and lobstermen. They took our advice and proposed a CAD cell siting outside of critical habitat and lobster grounds. They also met with us and designed their permit application to include terms that ensure the least amount of environmental harm during dredging.

Because the proposed dredge will be done with sensitivity to environmental concerns and will remove toxic sediments, we support, recommend, and urge you to fund this application. Thank you for considering our comments and this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Ivy L. Frignoca  
Casco Baykeeper

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