

# EASTPORT

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## PORT AUTHORITY

Tel: 207-853-4614 Fax: 207-853-9584

Website: [www.portofeastport.org](http://www.portofeastport.org)

P.O. Box 278, Eastport, ME 04631-0278

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

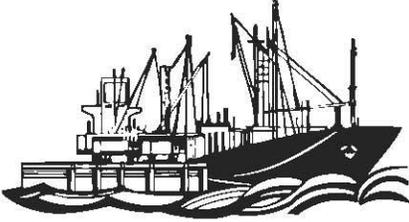
Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to write to you in strong support of the State of Maine's request for federal funding from the *2023 Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) Grant Program*. With this \$39 million funding request, the federal government can help prepare Maine ports for the future, benefit Maine and national economies, and provide good paying jobs for Mainers.

Maine's port industry and marine transportation system have been a significant economic driver for centuries. The hard-working people of Maine have made careers out of what is provided by the sea, and we have a robust maritime history that includes shipbuilding, fishing and lobstering, and three deep-water commercial seaports. Portland, Searsport, and Eastport have been the focal point of Maine's three-port-strategy since the late 1970's, and these ports have benefited greatly from planning and targeted investments.

Now it is the time to think about how our ports play a role in the state economy for the next decade. This funding application is our attempt to modernize Maine's three-ports. We have collaborated with local officials and private businesses to understand the highest priority projects that will yield the greatest impact Maine industry. Refrigerated container upgrades and dredging at the Port of Portland, Offshore Wind port development design and environmental work in Searsport, and the rehabilitation of the Eastport Fish Pier and extension of the Breakwater are all vital to prepare our ports for the 2030's and beyond. We have worked hard to put forward buildable projects that provide a return on investment to benefit the people of Maine, the New England Region, and the United States.

As the Director of the Eastport Port Authority, I can speak most directly to the portion of this funding at the Port of Eastport Maine, which proudly boasts the deepest natural seaport in the continental United States. This portion of the funding will allow us to complete the vital infrastructure improvements to our marine working waterfront Breakwater facility, a facility that initially won TIGER support from the Obama administration in 2013 for complete rehabilitation due to its importance in the transportation network at local, state and federal levels.



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These improvements however were forced to be scaled back due to an unexpected collapse of the Breakwater Facility literally days after the project was to get underway in 2014. And while this infrastructure failure underscored the vital need to address our nations aging infrastructure in real time, it's costing impacts required us to work collaboratively with the Maritime Administration and other State and local partners rethink and reduce the project to meet the funding limits at the time. The application before you now allows us to finally complete the overall design that was originally approved a decade ago and also build upon its successful charge as a center of marine activity via fisheries, cargo, cruise activities and overall sustainable tourism for the entire region.

We appreciate your continued support and commitment and thank you in advance for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher M. Gardner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Christopher M. Gardner  
Executive Director  
Eastport Port Authority