

April 10, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write to express the Greater Portland Council of Government's strong support for the State of Maine's 2023 Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) application.

As greater Portland's Economic Development District, GPCOG understands that for marine industries, the economic activity and value of the Portland and South Portland working waterfronts continue to be threatened by the lack of adequate berthing for vessels. Due to past decades of environmental contamination in the harbor it is economically infeasible for individual businesses to conduct the required maintenance dredging without assistance.

As a result, much of the berthing space is either accessible only a few hours on either side of high tide or not usable at all. The longer the harbor goes without adequate maintenance dredging, the greater the likelihood that small businesses along the harbor will face critical, insurmountable hardships. Unlike other small businesses, it is not possible for water dependent business to pick up and move. Our region's marine industries are tied to the harbor, and the harbor needs maintenance.

The cities, along with the Portland Harbor Commission and the Maine Department of Transportation, have been working hand in hand with the affected communities to complete this project for more than a decade. The improvements businesses will make as a result of the completion of this project will not only improve how the piers function but will increase their value and the value of the landside properties. Furthermore, the project has obtained approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project sponsors, the community at large, and private business owners are all supportive of the work and are prepared to support the project financially.

The Portland Harbor is a critical economic hub for the State of Maine and greater New England. But importantly, it is impossible for our long-standing and successful small businesses to continue without the harbor being brought into a state of good repair. We respectfully request that you favorably consider and approve this project that is critical to the men, women, and families who rely on the working waterfront.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Kristina Egan
Executive Director
Greater Portland Council of Governments