



August 24, 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 Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program

Dear U.S. Secretary Buttigieg:

The Island Institute is pleased to express our strong support of the Maine State Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) submission for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) FY2022 Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program. Funding support for operating costs would enhance the Maine State Ferry Service's (MSFS's) ability to provide reliable ferry service that is critical to supporting the islands they serve.

The six MSFS routes provide the only public transportation link and only way to move vehicles to and from the rural island communities of Frenchboro, Islesboro, Matinicus, North Haven, Swan's Island, and Vinalhaven. These communities depend on reliable, affordable, and sustainable ferry service for access to jobs, education, and services, as well as for emergency medical transport. Whether it is children who can't go to school, a small business owner who is shipping a perishable product, or seniors who need to visit their doctor, we regularly see the disruption in people's lives that occurs when regularly scheduled runs are canceled. In addition, the flow of goods to the islands to support home construction, road maintenance, and other infrastructure improvement projects relies on the ferry service. A small disruption can significantly impact the timing and costs of these projects. Without these services, these islands are disconnected from the rest of the State and very quickly would cease to exist as viable communities.

As a community development organization whose mission includes sustaining Maine's year round island communities, the Island Institute is directly interested in the long term sustainability of the MSFS.

The Island Institute supports and encourages MaineDOT's proposal for the Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program. This opportunity presented through FTA's Ferry Programs under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Consolidated Appropriations Act would help support crucial transportation service to the Maine island communities served by MSFS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Battista".

Nick Battista  
Chief Policy Officer  
Island Institute