



April 25, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Maine International Trade Center, I am pleased provide our organization's strong support of the State of Maine's request for federal funding under the *2023 Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) Grant Program*. The projects envisioned in this request will help prepare Maine ports for the future, which in turn will benefit both Maine's and the national economies, as well as support good paying jobs for all Mainers.

For centuries, Maine's port industry and marine transportation system have been a significant economic driver. Careers and fortunes have been made from what is provided by the sea; and Maine's people have a robust maritime history that includes shipbuilding, fishing, and lobstering. Our seaports at Portland, Searsport, and Eastport have been the focal point of the state's maritime strategy since the late 1970s. That long term effort has benefited the state greatly by focusing long-term planning and targeted public investments.

Improvements at the Port of Portland have raised the profile of international trade and the importance of modern port facilities in both the public consciousness and the state's economic development planning. It is time to consider how port infrastructure can play a role in expanding the economy in other parts of the state as well. Our partners have collaborated with local officials and stakeholders as well as private businesses to understand the highest priority projects: those 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 Eastport breakwater are all vital to prepare Maine's ports for the 2030s and beyond. These buildable projects will provide a significant return on investment that benefits the people of Maine and the United States.

Programs funded under this application will also provide an opportunity for Maine to take a major step in its path towards developing a floating Offshore Wind port facility. Maine has significant climate and clean energy goals, which include a significant development opportunity for floating offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine and beyond. This emerging industry depends entirely on floating wind-specific port infrastructure; Maine intends lead by developing the largest dedicated floating offshore wind port facility on the US East Coast.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wade Merritt", is written over a horizontal line.

Wade Merritt  
President, Maine International Trade Center