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April 18, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We strongly support the Portland Harbor Dredge and CAD Cell Project.

The economic activity and value of the Portland and South Portland working waterfronts continue to be threatened by the lack of adequate berthing for our vessels. Due to over seven decades of environmental contamination in the harbor, it is economically infeasible for us as a small business to conduct the required maintenance dredging without assistance. As a result, much of our berthing space is accessible for only a few hours on either side of high tide and is not accessible for the rest of the 24-hour day. The longer the harbor goes without adequate maintenance dredging, the greater the likelihood that my business - and those of fellow pier owners - will face critical, insurmountable hardships. Unlike other small businesses, it is not possible for me to simply rent another storefront and move my water-based business to another waterfront.

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 a number of years. Once the project is underway, it is our plan to invest in the refurbishment and enhancement of our existing pier infrastructure and expand our pier infrastructure. The improvements our business 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 as well. Without an avenue to bring the harbor into a state of good repair, we cannot secure the funding to improve our pier infrastructure.

This project has obtained approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the project sponsors, the community at large, and we, the private business owners, are all supportive of the work and prepared to support the project financially. All but this last tranche of funding has been allocated, and only needs the federal match for this essential project to take place.

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 business to continue without it being in 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,

Michael Soucy
Director of Operations
Port Harbor Marine