

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

April 18, 2023

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

As the owners of Merrill's Wharf, we are in strong support of the Portland Harbor Dredge and CAD Cell Project.

The economic activity and value of the Portland pier owners continue to be threatened by the lack of adequate berthing for our vessels. Due to decades of environmental contamination in the harbor, it is economically infeasible for us to conduct the required maintenance dredging without assistance. As a result, some of our berthing space is accessible for only a few hours on either side of high tide and some is not accessible at all. The longer the harbor goes without adequate maintenance dredging, the greater the likelihood that our property, and those of fellow pier owners, will face critical, even insurmountable hardships. Unlike other infrastructures, it is not possible to accommodate new waterfront dependent business, and properly service our existing berthing tenants, all waterfront dependent business.

The city of Portland, the Portland Harbor Commission and the Maine Department of Transportation, have been working together to complete this project for a number of years. Once the project is finally underway, our plan is to invest in the refurbishment and enhancement of our existing pier infrastructure and be able to expand our berthing. The improvements our business will make because of the completion of this project will not only improve how our pier functions, it will also protect its history and value. Without an avenue to bring the harbor into a state of good repair, we simply cannot secure the funding to improve our pier infrastructure.

I understand that this project has obtained approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the project sponsors, the community at large; and we, as a private business owner, are supportive of the work and prepared to support our portion of the project financially. As the final piece of funding has been allocated, it only needs the federal match for this essential project to begin.

Portland Harbor is a critical economic hub for both the State of Maine and greater New England. More importantly, it is impossible for our 34 yearlong stewardship of this successful pier to continue without it being in a state of good repair. We respectfully request that you favorably consider and give approval to this critical project and those 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,

Dan Jacques
Waterfront Maine