

May 15, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is pleased to submit a letter supporting the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority's (PhilaPort) FY 2020 U.S. Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program application for the *Southport Wharf Development and Port Expansion* project. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Philadelphia Region which includes a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey, DVRPC works with stakeholders to approve and advance Federal transportation infrastructure investment in the region.

This application, *Southport Wharf Development and Port Expansion*, is consistent with *Connections 2045*, which is DVRPC's Long-Range Plan that was adopted by the DVRPC Board on October 26, 2017. It is also consistent with DVRPC's long-range vision for freight and is integral to the Delaware Valley Freight Centers Initiative. Should the Department of Transportation select this application for BUILD grant funding, DVRPC confirms that we are committed to take necessary steps, as required, to ensure it will be included in appropriate documents, such as the Long-Range Plan. Furthermore, DVRPC will continue to closely coordinate the undertaking of this proposed project with appropriate local freight stakeholders through its longstanding freight advisory committee, the Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force.

The requested funding for this project will provide for the construction of a new 1,056-foot multi-use berth at the Southport Marine Terminal, in the City of Philadelphia. This new berth's immediate proximity to vehicle and other rolling stock as well as container operations provide numerous efficiency and logistical benefits. These benefits include placing vehicles at a first point of rest in immediate proximity to the processing center, more efficient berthing operations, and reducing transfers between processing centers. The project will enable more efficient export vehicle opportunities for intermodal delivery via rail.

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The Port of Philadelphia has experienced substantial growth over the past five years. Support for the continued development of the Southport Marine Terminal will further this growth, which will bring new jobs and sustain the region's global competitiveness. Successful development of this project will represent the first Deepwater berth construction in Philadelphia in almost 50 years.

Creating a modern multi-modal transportation system is part of DVRPC's vision for the Delaware Valley. Our transportation network is already expansive and interconnected. Targeted freight infrastructure investments from the BUILD grant program for projects, such as Philadelphia Regional Port Authority's *Southport Wharf Development and Port Expansion*, will improve the transportation system's performance, better integrate facilities, and improve freight mobility and efficiency that will sustain and enhance economic and quality of life benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors to the region. We look forward to your support of this project that is important to our region.

Sincerely,



Barry Seymour
Executive Director

cc: Ayanna Williams, Director of Government and Public Affairs, Philadelphia Regional Port Authority
Michael Carroll, Deputy Managing Director for Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability, City of Philadelphia
Jennie Granger, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, PennDOT

BS:ks