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May 15, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590

**RE: PhilaPort Southport Wharf Development and Port Expansion Project**

Dear Secretary Chao:

This letter expresses the support of the Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay for the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority's (PhilaPort) Southport Wharf Development and Port Expansion project. PhilaPort is requesting \$25 million in federal grant funding to be used in the construction of a multi-use berth to accommodate roll-on/roll-off (Ro/Ro) and military vessels.

As a trade organization dedicated to promoting commerce on the Delaware River and Bay, we are pleased to support PhilaPort in this endeavor and in its goal to provide additional maritime capacity within the regional port system — capacity that is vital to fostering regional and national economic growth in the coming years.

PhilaPort's project will create hundreds of direct jobs in the port itself, as well as several thousand additional induced and indirect jobs, which simply stated, translates into millions of dollars in revenues for the local economy. In addition to providing good-paying blue-collar jobs crucial to a region struggling with pockets of poverty, a dire predicament made more pronounced by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, a berth at the Southport facility would provide a series of benefits. These include increased efficiency in berthing operations, cargo placement in immediate proximity to the berth and processing center, and decreased potential for vehicle damage. Once completed, the berth will also enable improved and effectual export vehicle opportunities and intermodal delivery via rail.

Funding awarded under the U.S. Department of Transportation's grant programs would allow PhilaPort to build a new berth adjacent to more than 160 acres of cargo storage, a project that represents the first deep-water berth construction in Philadelphia in almost 50 years, and one which complements the soon to be completed Delaware River 45-foot main channel deepening project.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact me for further information at 215-925-2615 or at [dennis.rochford@maritimedelriv.com](mailto:dennis.rochford@maritimedelriv.com).

Sincerely,

Dennis Rochford  
President

cc: Lisa Himer, Vice President