

ASTRO HOLDINGS, INC.
3301 S. Columbus Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19148

February 23, 2023

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

RE: Packer Avenue Marine Terminal Connector Bridge Project

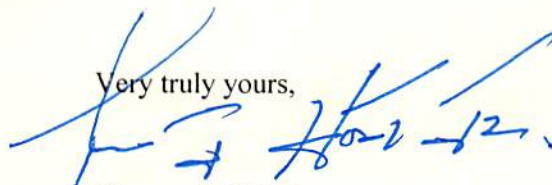
Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Among the many things learned from the recent pandemic experience, we found the supply chain needs to be more adaptive to changing needs. The industry has to be able to handle greater fluctuations in volume levels and flow and geographic origin and destination demands. Containership operators should be able to find and utilize less congested options and additional ports-of-call to keep freight moving. The Port of Philadelphia (Port) was relied upon more than ever before and experienced over 21% container growth since 2019. The market indicates this trend will continue and the Port needs to continue with significant redevelopment in order to keep pace with containerization's growing demands. This letter is to communicate my strong support for the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority's (PhilaPort) Packer Avenue Marine Terminal (PAMT) Connector Bridge project. PhilaPort is applying for funding from the RAISE, "Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity", discretionary grant program. The funds will be utilized to construct a 580-foot, two lane connector bridge between the PAMT, the Port's container terminal, and an approximately 40-acre adjacent waterfront site (Publicker). The two sites are currently split by an outfall water canal and a Walt Whitman Bridge right-of-way and are connected by only a narrow 2-lane pathway. This pathway is used as the main truck entrance to the PAMT as well as the connection to shuttle containers between the two sites.

Currently, the pathway is over utilized, creating excessive congestion leading to increased equipment idling times as well as traffic conflicts. Construction of a connector bridge over the water canal will add traffic flow capacity and unlock the Publicker site's capability as a viable first point of rest for inbound containers. The improvement will provide for significant reduction in traffic risks while increasing container handling capacity. The reduction in time of transit between the sites also has both environmental and cost competitiveness benefits. More specifically, this project will increase safety while saving 100 miles of in-terminal container transit, 1.4 vessel hours, and 38 hours of equipment run time per the average vessel call. And the added capacity enables the handling of more volume which directly and indire

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this important project. If you have any questions, I can be contacted at (215) 870-0328.

Very truly yours,



Thomas J. Holt, Jr.
President