

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 9, 2019

Hon. Elaine L. Chao, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for The Philadelphia Regional Port Authority's (PhilaPort) application for \$25,000,000 in discretionary grant funds from the 2019 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program.

PhilaPort is an independent agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania charged with the management, maintenance, marketing, and promotion of port facilities along the Delaware River in Pennsylvania, and with strategic planning throughout the greater port district. Port cargoes and the activities they generate are responsible for thousands of direct and indirect jobs in the Philadelphia area and throughout Pennsylvania.

According to the Inrix 2018 Global Traffic Scorecard, the Northeast is home to the nation's most congested cities. The maritime transportation system is a viable and underutilized alternative that can play an important role in enhancing the capacity and performance of this transportation system. The Southport Berth Development and Port Expansion project aims to contribute to the reduction of this landside congestion and stimulate the marine freight industry in the greater Philadelphia region.

PhilaPort is seeking these funds in order to provide gap funding for the development of a new \$80.5 M multi-use berth to accommodate roll-on/roll off (Ro/Ro) and military vessels at Southport. The proposed BUILD project, coupled with the nearly complete deepening of the Delaware River shipping channel to accommodate post-Panamax vessels will allow vessels to dock directly at the re-developed Southport Terminal. Vehicular and military cargo can then be efficiently stored near the berth. It is more cost-effective for vessels to deliver directly to Philadelphia than to bypass this key metropolitan region and incur the added cost of trucking Philadelphia-bound cargo in from other ports. Additionally, by shifting the handling of imported automobiles from PhilaPort's Packer Avenue Marine Terminal (PAMT) to its Southport facility, the project will increase berth and storage capacity at PAMT and provide more berth availability to handle larger container ships.

I respectfully ask that you give PhilaPort's application all due consideration. In the event that this application is selected for funding, please direct a copy of your award notification to my Grants Coordinator, Alex Byrne, via email at Alexandra_Byrne@toomey.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Pat Toomey
U.S. Senator