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Senate of Pennsylvania

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January 17, 2025

The Honorable Sean P. Duffy
Secretary Designate
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington D.C. 20590

RE: South Philadelphia Multimodal Freight Optimization Plan

Dear Secretary Designate:

I am writing to offer my strong support for the competitive grant application submitted by the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority (PhilaPort). PhilaPort is seeking federal funding support from the USDOT through the FY25 Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant fund program. PhilaPort is requesting a \$3,325,000 RAISE grant for the **South Philadelphia Multimodal Freight Optimization Plan**, which will support an innovative public-private partnership to plan and design freight connections between major freight and logistics sites in South Philadelphia.

This visionary public-private partnership will include PhilaPort's Packer Avenue Marine Terminal and The Bellwether District, a 1300-acre redevelopment site which sits in my district that will become a hub for logistics, e-commerce, and life sciences, and other critical economic development and commerce assets in South and Southwest Philadelphia. The Bellwether District development includes over 14 million square feet of industrial and innovation facilities and is anticipated to attract \$4 billion in private investment while creating over 10,000 new jobs in the Commonwealth.

PhilaPort is a major contributor to the North American freight market, handling nearly 6.9 million metric tons of cargo in 2023, generating an estimated \$1.6 billion in economic impact. In the coming years, container volumes are expected to increase and container throughput at PhilaPort is projected to increase nearly 20 times in volume from 2024 to 2040. Combined with the historic development underway at The Bellwether District, it is essential to plan and design freight networks to efficiently

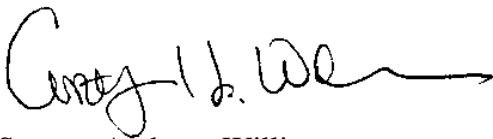
accommodate added traffic to catalyze economic development, leverage private capital, and accelerate the movement of goods and commerce across the region.

Once implemented, this project will balance the benefits of economic development with the safety and wellbeing of all roadway users and surrounding communities. Through proactive planning, this project will also maximize supply chain efficiency and support economic growth in the region, catalyzing additional private investment and generating exponential job growth for the City and the Commonwealth.

I am excited by the historic levels of economic development and job creation this critical public-private partnership will create for Pennsylvania's largest and oldest city. Not only will this collaboration address growing challenges related to aging infrastructure, significant traffic delays and freight connectivity, but it will also create significant economic opportunities for the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I offer my full support for this important initiative and hope that you will give it your highest consideration for funding.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Anthony Williams

PA State Senator, 8th Legislative District