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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 29, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in strong support of the application recently submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) for funding through the FY2022 Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program. If awarded this funding will be used to construct a replacement ferry for the Maine State Ferry Service's (MSFS) existing 35-year-old vessel, the *Margaret Chase Smith*.

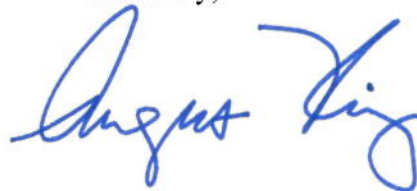
The *Margaret Chase Smith* is the only means of public transportation to and from the rural community of Islesboro, Maine. It is the only way for vehicles to travel on and off the island, therefore providing a crucial link for residents and visitors to the island. Out of the six island communities that the MSFS services, the Islesboro route is the most-traveled. In 2019, the route carried over 180,000 walk-on passengers, and over 73,000 vehicles.

The community of Islesboro has roughly 600 year-round residents, with a summer population that swells to over 2,000. Residents and visitors alike rely on a sustainable ferry service for access to jobs and services, including emergency medical transports. The MSFS provides service to and from the island with nine round trips Monday through Saturday and eight round trips on Sundays during peak summer months.

Replacement of this aging vessel is crucial to maintaining reliable service to the island. It is important to note that MaineDOT has proposed a new vessel that will be either electric or hybrid propulsion. The Transportation Working Group of Maine's Climate Council has identified transportation as being responsible for 54 percent of Maine's greenhouse gas emissions. If the replacement vessel is funded, Maine will be able to take a prudent step forward in enabling a future less reliant on fossil fuels.

I strongly support MaineDOT's efforts on this worthy project. I urge the U.S. Department of Transportation's careful review of their application, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify Adam Lachman in my office (202) 224-5344 when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



ANGUS S. KING, JR.  
United States Senator

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