



April 25, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

**Maine Better
Transportation
Association**

150 Capitol Street, Suite 5
Augusta, Maine 04330

207-622-0526
mbtaonline.org

Please count the Maine Better Transportation Association (MBTA) as a strong supporter of the State of Maine's request for federal funding from the *2023 Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) Grant Program*. This request is critical to the State of Maine as we advance our economy and enhance clean transportation for the region. Clearly, this \$39 million request, if funded, would be a strong show of support from the federal government as the state helps to prepare Maine ports for the future.

MBTA is a statewide coalition of 450 members who plan, design, build, maintain, operate and use Maine's transportation infrastructure. They include bus and rail companies, transportation design engineers and contractors, public works officials, marine and aviation entities, and others committed to a safer and more efficient transportation network.

Maine's maritime and port industries have a long history in Maine and are an integral part of our economy and of our heritage. Our maritime industry has provided well-paying jobs to many hard-working people of Maine who have made careers out of what is provided by the sea. Our maritime heritage includes shipbuilding, fishing and lobstering, and three deep-water commercial seaports: Portland, Searsport, and Eastport. They have been the focal point of Maine's three-port-strategy since the late 1970's and have benefited greatly from planning and targeted investments.

As we prepare to move our port infrastructure forward in the next decade, MBTA is confident that this funding, if received, will help enable our ports to further enhance the state's economy. The funding will be used to modernize Maine's three major ports, and the MaineDOT and Maine Port Authority are aware of the needs as they have sought input from local and private officials and businesses to better understand the highest priorities for each region that will yield the greatest impact for Maine. From the public outreach conducted by MaineDOT, we know that the following priorities would include buildable projects that provide a return on investment to benefit the region and the entire country:

- Port of Portland: Refrigerated container upgrades and dredging
- Port of Searsport: Offshore wind port development design and environmental work
- Eastport: Rehabilitation of the Eastport Fish Pier and extension of the Breakwater

Finally, this application enables Maine to take a major step in its path towards developing a floating offshore wind port facility to help meet the state's aggressive but necessary climate and clean energy goals. The emerging offshore wind industry depends entirely on specific port infrastructure, and Maine hopes to be a leader in this sector by developing the largest dedicated floating offshore wind port facility on the US East Coast.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your continued support and commitment and for your consideration of this critical application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria R. Fuentes". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the word "Sincerely,".

Maria R. Fuentes
Executive Director