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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 17, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write today in support of the application from the Port of Philadelphia (PhilaPort) to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Multimodal Discretionary Grant Program (MPDG) for its Packer Avenue Marine Terminal (PAMT) Connector Bridge project. I urge you to give this application full and fair consideration.

PhilaPort staff has informed me that the port has seen high levels of year-over-year growth in recent years. I understand that this has been a boon for the economic development of the Greater Philadelphia region, but that the increased movement of freight has created congestion issues within the port. PhilaPort leaders have explained that in order to accommodate this volume, its tenant Astro Holdings, Inc. (Astro) has committed to expanding its presence beyond its current PAMT site and into the adjacent 40-acre Publicker site.

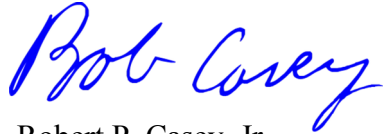
However, PhilaPort executives have further explained that the PAMT and the Publicker site are not currently well connected, divided by the right-of-way for the Walt Whitman Bridge over the Delaware River. To get from the PAMT to the Publicker site, I understand that trucks must drive through the heart of the port, creating excess congestion and blocking the main entrance for other vehicles. PhilaPort executives have told me that without improved connectivity between the PAMT and the Publicker site, it will be difficult for Astro to expand its operations and handle the increase in freight.

To address this, I understand that PhilaPort is seeking funding from the INFRA program under the MPDG funding opportunity to build a new, two-lane, 580-linear-foot bridge connecting the PAMT and the Publicker site. I understand that this bridge is part of the comprehensive PhilaPort Port Development Plan 1.0 and is anticipated to reduce turn time by 1.4 hours per call and save almost 38 hours of equipment run time per call.

In addition to these efficiency upgrades for port operations, I also understand that this new bridge would boost regional economic efficiency by allowing for more freight to flow more quickly through the port. PhilaPort has also emphasized that the bridge will have positive environmental impacts by cutting down significantly on idling and intra-port congestion.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this grant application. Finally, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (202) 224-6324.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator