

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write in strong support of the proposal submitted by the City of Providence in conjunction with ProvPort, Inc. for funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Tiger II program. Funding will support three initiatives intended to transform the Port of Providence into a modern, efficient, and highly competitive marine cargo center.

ProvPort, Inc., a nonprofit public-private partnership formed in 1994, owns and operates the municipal port of the City of Providence - the Port of Providence. The port is an important center of economic activity that has increased its marine cargo throughput from 750,000 tons in 2001 to more than 3.2 million tons in 2008. As a result, port-related employment climbed from 800 to 2,400 jobs.

As outlined in the grant proposal, the project has three elements that will significantly expand the port's capacities and exports, provide job growth in Rhode Island and the region, and replace existing fossil fuel consumption with renewable energy production. The port has significant assets including deep water berths (40 foot depth), onsite rail, and close proximity to Interstate 95. The central component of the proposal is the purchase and installation of two high performance cranes to replace existing cranes that are at the end of their operational lives. These replacement barge cranes would enhance safety and are essential to continue the port's existing bulk material operations and expand capabilities to accommodate container operations. The project is estimated to remove on average 1,000 trucks per week off the northeast corridor highway system - one of the most congested in the country. Additionally, the project will implement clean energy technology projects that include the installation of two wind turbines and deployment of solar panels on buildings within the port campus. The combination of these projects will reduce traffic congestion, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and provide clean renewable energy to run port operations.

Rhode Island has been among the hardest hit states during this economic crisis with a current unemployment rate of 11.9 percent. According to a Benefit-Cost Analysis conducted by Bryant University, the Tiger II investment will preserve 2400 existing jobs at the port and generate a total yearly output of \$28.4 million and 630 additional direct jobs with an average salary of \$80,000. Employment figures project the creation of more than 1,600 jobs that are related to port operations, with an annual economic stimulus output of \$71.8 million nationally.

We commend this project that will modernize and enhance the Port of Providence's operations, facilitate economic growth, and provide dramatic job creation in Rhode Island and the region. In accordance with all applicable rules and regulations, we urge you to give this application due and through consideration given the economic need of the state. Thank you for your attention to this application and please do not hesitate to contact our offices if we can provide further assistance to you in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Patrick Kennedy
Member of Congress



Jim Langevin
Member of Congress