



RHODE ISLAND

**Economic Development Corporation**

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September 8, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing in strong support of the creation of the **ReNEWable Port** and urge your careful review and support for the funding of this project through the TIGER grant program. This project is critical for Rhode Island and has tremendous economic benefit for our region and the nation. The **ReNEWable Port** will help to transform and grow the Rhode Island economy spurring much needed long-term job creation and by shifting energy production from fossil fuels to renewable solar and wind generated energy.

This project has three major components:

- 1) Expand the operation of the Port of Providence (ProvPort) from a successful bulk operation to include a container operation, thus reducing trucking and carbon production in the Northeast Corridor.
- 2) Convert the energy use of the Port operation from fossil fuel generated electricity to solar and wind generated renewable energy.
- 3) Create a job-producing, inter-modal transportation hub that links sea, rail and highways to expedite and reduce both the cost and energy to move goods in the northeast.

The **ReNEWable Port** grant will help to create nearly 2,000 high paying, long-term jobs in Rhode Island and in the region (according to a "Benefit-Cost Analysis of ProvPort" conducted by Bryant University). Specifically, this project will create 938 permanent positions in Rhode Island and an additional 1,056 positions regionally, each with average annual compensation in excess of \$79,000.

Rhode Island is an economically distressed state. Our State's unemployment rate is now 12.7% and is in excess of 15% for the City of Providence. This rate is second in the

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nation only to Michigan and our unemployment rate has exceeded the national average by one full point for 21 consecutive months. Creating jobs both in the short-term and providing permanent jobs are critical for this region to begin an economic recovery. This project is a true "shovel ready" project. Uniquely, this project can break ground upon funding, requires no significant permitting, and begin creating an economic recovery immediately.

Moreover, this innovative initiative is a true public-private partnership that has brought together state and local government, more than a dozen corporations, universities, and a range of non-profits all committed to expanding the Port, reducing carbon gases, and increasing critical employment.

My hope is that you will give the *ReNEWable Port* application every consideration and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Michael Saul". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

J. Michael Saul  
Interim Executive Director