



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

September 10, 2009

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As the respective leaders of both the Rhode Island House and Senate we are writing to express our collective strong support for the funding the the **ReNEWable Port** project through the TIGER Discretionary grant program. The **ReNEWable Port** is a positive effort to grow jobs, improve American efficiency, and dramatically reduce Greenhouse gases.

As you know, Rhode Island now is amongst the states hardest hit by this recession. Rhode Island has the second highest unemployment rate in the country. Now, 12.7 percent of Rhode Islanders are unemployed and an estimated 23 percent are underemployed. Of equal concern, Rhode Island has ranked as a “distressed” state for 21 consecutive months, as the State’s unemployment rate continues to exceed the national average by a full point.

This project achieves four major goals:

- 1) The **ReNEWable Port** expands 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) Converts the energy use of the Port operation from fossil fuel-generated electricity to solar and wind generated renewable energy.
- 3) Creates 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.

- 4) Protects the existing 2,400 jobs related to the Port that are now at threat due to an aging infrastructure.

The **ReNEWable Port** will serve as a critical spark to economic growth. According to a Benefit-Cost Analysis completed by Bryant University:

The combined construction of the proposed ProvPort The ReNEWable Port, in its first expected year of full operation, will generate a financial contribution to the local economy of approximately \$100 million of output and \$121 million for the region. Most importantly, \$4 million locally and more than \$48 million regionally will be sustained as mid and long-term new income.

For the Northeastern corridor region, the stimulus will result in \$72 million of new output and approximately 432 new jobs. Nationally, the project will generate \$120 million in stimulus with 634 jobs. In total, the project will create nearly 1,000 permanent jobs.

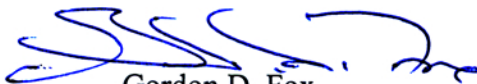
This project is truly “shovel ready.” Uniquely, the **ReNEWable Port** is scheduled to begin as soon as funding is awarded and will be completed in approximately 18 months. This timetable is imperative to assist in the State’s recovery. The jobs created are high paying – according to evaluation of this project; the nearly 1,000 jobs created will average in excess of \$80,000 in wages and benefits.

Lastly, the **ReNEWABLE Port** serves as a model public-private partnership that has mobilized state and local government, businesses, universities, and a range of non-profits all committed to expanding the ProvPort operations, realizing the environmental benefits of reducing greenhouse gases, and most importantly, creating much needed new jobs.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions about the importance of this TIGER grant application.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Gordon D. Fox
House Majority Leader



Daniel P. Connors
Senate Majority Leader