



April 18, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the City of South Portland, Maine, our residents, and citizens, I write to express our strongest support of and for funding of the Portland Harbor Dredge and CAD Cell Project which is included in the 2023 Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) Grant Application being submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT). This project is a collaboration of by the Cities of South Portland and Portland, the Portland Harbor Commission and the Maine Department of Transportation.

As South Portlanders, we are privileged to live, work, and play in a community and region with such beautiful and productive natural resources, particularly our water resources. Our rivers, estuaries, harbor, and bay define the geography of our community. Water also frames our identity as a City. Being a port is integral to our character and confers a significance about who we have been, who we are today, and who we aspire to be.

Unfortunately, today we find our harbor in a diminished state of repair. Generations of sediment build up around our historic piers and wharfs has polluted our ecological resources and diminished our ability to work and recreate on the water. Commercial fishing, island ferry service, freight transportation, marine tourism, and other maritime enterprises are bricks in the foundation of our marine economy. Every foot of usable pier edge lost to sedimentation erodes this foundation and diminishes our ability to serve these community-defining industries.

While our heritage of maritime enterprise remains a point of community pride, it is in our future where the ocean holds our fate. New maritime industries are taking hold on our shores. A burgeoning Aquaculture sector holds promise to feed the world and absorb carbon from the atmosphere, helping counter the impacts of climate change. Ocean energy, from both wind and tides, holds promise to provide abundant, clean, and renewable energy sources to power our future. Both traditional and emerging uses of the ocean require full access to our harbor assets. Our piers, wharfs, ramps, and yards provide that access. Without investment, we lose access to the ocean. Without dredging, *South Portland will lose the port.*

This project is the culmination of several years of collaborative work and frankly, we are at a tipping point. Simply put, without the funding provided from the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) Grant, we will not be able to restore our harbor assets to optimal vitality. I cannot overstate the value of our harbor and the economic benefits derived from its use. As our community and economies diversify, we must retain and expand our relationship to the ocean. Many of South Portland's residents, particularly those in our new Mainer and immigrant populations, work in the fishing and seafood processing sectors, earning good wages for important work. This project will help keep and expand those employment opportunities.

We respectfully request that you favorably consider and approve this project so that we can invest in the future of our working waterfront. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions.

Sincerely,


Katherine W. Lewis, Mayor