



VIRGINIA PORT AUTHORITY
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The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 2, 2021

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Port of Virginia is writing to express support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) *Future I-87 Resiliency, Innovation, Safety, and Economy Project* (the "Future I-87 RISE Project" or "the Project") application to the USDOT INFRA Program. The Project will improve freight mobility by providing an interstate highway connection between The Port of Virginia, the Carolina Connector (CCX) Intermodal Rail Terminal, and Raleigh, NC while supporting regional and national economic vitality and resiliency.

The Port of Virginia supports this Project as a step forward in North Carolina realizing the vision of building out a resilient network of freight distribution corridors in eastern North Carolina with direct connections to The Port of Virginia in Hampton Roads and I-95 in Raleigh. This corridor is critical to connecting northeastern North Carolina industries and farms to their best export option through The Port of Virginia. Improvements along the future I-87 corridor will produce trade benefits by capitalizing on the \$800M capacity and optimization investments at The Port of Virginia, the \$270M investment in the Carolina Connector Intermodal Rail Terminal (CCX), and direct access to east coast markets in the I-95 corridor.

While the Project addresses multiple evaluation criteria for the INFRA program, improving the economic competitiveness of eastern North Carolina's rural communities along future I-87 lies at the heart of this project. The Virginia Port Authority, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia marketing itself as The Port of Virginia, is the third largest container port on the U.S. East Coast. The port operates four marine terminals in Hampton Roads, one terminal in Richmond, VA and an intermodal container transfer facility in Front Royal, VA. The Port of Virginia is dedicated to serving as a catalyst for commerce by driving business to and through the Commonwealth of Virginia to markets across the nation.

The Port of Virginia currently serves hundreds of companies that have distribution, manufacturing and/or logistics centers located in North Carolina. Interstate 87 will provide a direct interstate route from the Port's harbor terminals in Hampton Roads to Raleigh, NC, reducing motor freight congestion on I-95 and providing a more fluid and faster route to access eastern and central North Carolina markets from The Port of Virginia's terminals.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support the *Future I-87 Resiliency, Innovation, Safety, Economy Project* and the NCDOT's application for federal INFRA grant funding to accelerate its construction.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Edwards
CEO and Executive Director
The Port of Virginia