



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

02/28/2024

J.R. "JOEY" HOPKINS  
SECRETARY

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**SUBJECT:** Support for North Carolina State Ports Authority's Modernization and Revitalization of Barge Berths project at the Port of Morehead City under the United States Department of Transportation's FY2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program.

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, I am writing to express our support for the North Carolina State Ports Authority's (NC Ports) application for the United States Department of Transportation's FY2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program to fund the Modernization and Revitalization of Barge Berths project at the Port of Morehead City.

NC Ports owns and operates an ocean port terminal in Morehead City, North Carolina in Carteret County, and operation of the terminal is a tremendous catalyst for economic growth and development throughout North Carolina and the region. The port terminal has contributed more than \$16.2 billion in annual economic contribution to the state's economy constituted by goods moving through the port facilities and has supported 88,200 full-time jobs at North Carolina businesses.

The barge berths at issue at the Port of Morehead City serve Nutrien, the Port of Morehead City's largest and most trusted port partner. Nutrien moves nearly 800,000 tons of cargo via barge and vessel annually through the Port of Morehead City. Nutrien is the largest producer of potash and the third largest producer of nitrogen fertilizer in the world with a phosphate mine and production facility in Aurora, North Carolina. Nutrien's Aurora mine facility is serviced by the Port of Morehead City and is the largest integrated [phosphate mining](#) and [chemical plant](#) in the world. It is the area's largest private employer, contributing approximately \$250 million in spending in the state in 2023 and \$8 million in state and local taxes annually. To continue servicing this important customer and accommodate its growing volumes at the Port of Morehead City, new barge berths are needed.

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The Modernization and Revitalization of Barge Berths project will rebuild the barge berths on the eastern side of the Port of Morehead City in the area of the port used by Nutrien; this investment will extend the life of the barge berths for fifty years and allow Nutrien to continue serving worldwide customers via barge and keep cargo off highways and railroads. Overall, this investment will reduce traffic congestion and improve safety, efficiency, system performance, and infrastructure, as well as deliver environmental benefits to the community.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

*H. L. Cox*

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H. L. "Drew" Cox, PE  
Eastern Deputy Chief Engineer  
North Carolina Department of Transportation