

2163 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2605
DISTRICT OFFICES:
2930 WETMORE AVENUE, SUITE 9F
EVERETT, WA 98201
(425) 252-3188
119 N. COMMERCIAL STREET, SUITE 275
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225
(360) 733-4500
E-Mail: Rick.Larsen@mail.house.gov
<http://larsen.house.gov>

RICK LARSEN
2ND DISTRICT, WASHINGTON
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4702

RANKING MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

May 21, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I request your full and fair consideration of the Port of Bellingham's application for a grant under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY23-24) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (CRISI). The port seeks \$14,344,800 to enhance on-dock rail infrastructure at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST).

The Port of Bellingham is seeking a CRISI grant to construct a rail spur off the BNSF Railway's north-south main line and five loading tracks into the BST. Once complete, this project will enable the port to provide direct Class I rail access to the terminal and enable deep draft vessels to transfer cargo directly to rail.

CRISI funding would support the port's efforts to bring the BST to its full potential for advancing regional economic health and resiliency. The port estimates that a working rail connection could double the terminal's throughput. In turn, the projected increase in vessel calls would create the types of jobs and union opportunities, from pilots to tugboat crews, engineers, technicians and service employees, that support a robust working waterfront. Over time, the rail connection would reduce heavy traffic, which would enhance road safety, reduce emissions and minimize road repairs.

For these reasons, I request your full and fair consideration of the Port of Bellingham's FY23-24 CRISI application. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
U.S. Representative
Washington State, Second District

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

April 4, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the Port of Bellingham's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program. The Port of Bellingham is seeking \$14,344,800 for the Bellingham Shipping Terminal Rail Connection project.

Located in Whatcom County, the Port of Bellingham is strategically located in the North Puget Sound 20 miles south of the U.S.-Canada border between the Ports of Seattle and the Port of Vancouver. The Port of Bellingham is unable to realize the full potential utility of the Bellingham Shipping Terminal because of the lack of a rail connection from the Port to the Terminal. Rail shipping offers Port customers a more affordable and environmentally friendly alternative to land transport of cargo. Additionally, the lack of rail prohibits maximal imports and exports of cargo to and from the Port, which in turn limits Port productivity and job creation.

The Port of Bellingham will use CRISI grant funds to restore a rail connection between the Port of Bellingham and the Bellingham Shipping Terminal to provide on-dock rail access. Rail connection will reduce thousands of heavy truck trips over time, making roadways safer, reducing emissions and congestion, improving the state of good repair for the local and regional networks, facilitating international commerce, and utilizing a safe and effective means of transportation with non-hazardous cargo moving through the Port. This greater capacity will also support additional vessel calls, which in turn support a working waterfront of highly skilled jobs that support cargo vessels such as pilots, tugboat crews, barge fuel crews, service companies, technicians, and engineering firms. These increased vessel calls also generate revenue and development through crew changes and vessel husbandry which increases hotel occupancy, and foot traffic through the Bellingham International Airport.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the Port of Bellingham's application to the CRISI grant program.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell

United States Senator



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Transportation Building
310 Maple Park Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-7300
360-705-7000
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

May 3, 2024

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

RE: FRA APPLICATION - BELLINGHAM SHIPPING TERMINAL RAIL CONNECTION

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Washington State Department of Transportation supports the Port of Bellingham's funding request for the Bellingham Shipping Terminal Rail Connection project. The Port is seeking \$17 million to provide direct Class I rail service to the Port's only shipping terminal.

Connecting existing rail at the Port to the BNSF mainline, will create another link in Washington state's freight supply chain. This rail connection will allow the Port to ship to domestic and international markets – including Asia, Canada, and the eastern United States.

These improvements will permit the Port of Bellingham to join other marine cargo locations in offering rail shipments directly to and from the port. Throughput of cargo and vessel calls are expected to nearly double with this expansion,

The overall project's public benefits are consistent with state and federal objectives concerning the more environmentally sustainable movement of freight via rail. Moving freight shipments from trucks to rail will reduce carbon emissions, promote safer roadways, decrease needed road maintenance, and enhance safety for shipments.

The project is of great importance to freight movement in Washington state and we encourage you to fund this freight rail project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Millar'.

Roger Millar, PE, FASCE, AICP
Secretary of Transportation



French Thompson
General Director
Public Infrastructure & Investments

BNSF Railway Company
P. O. Box 961502
Fort Worth, TX 76161-0052

2600 Lou Menk Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76131-2830
(817) 352-6316

French.Thompson@BNSF.com

May 28, 2024

Amit Bose, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 202590

Subject: BNSF Letter of Support – Port of Bellingham BNSF Connector

Dear Administrator Bose,

BNSF Railway supports efforts by the Port of Bellingham to secure federal discretionary funding under the 2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) discretionary grant for the Port of Bellingham BNSF Connector Project. If awarded, the project will fund the required construction of re-establishing a rail connection.

BNSF values our working relationship with the Port of Bellingham and is prepared to work with all involved public agencies on further development of this project, subject to satisfactory review of final engineering and entering into definitive agreements as may be required by BNSF or other project stakeholders.

BNSF appreciates your thorough review of this application and looks forward to continuing its relationship with the Port of Bellingham through this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line and a small mark at the end.

French Thompson
General Director – Public Infrastructure & Investments



May 1, 2024

Secretary Peter Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Foss Maritime writes in support of the grant application of the Port of Bellingham under the USDOT's discretionary grant program for connecting the Port of Bellingham Washington Shipping Terminal to the main BNSF railway.

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to offer our support for the Port of Bellingham's DOT discretionary grant application. We are pleased that the Port is continuing with its program of major capital investment as part of its objective of maximizing future commercial activity at this facility.

We believe this grant, if funded, will be a significantly factor in facilitating the return of rail to the Bellingham Shipping Terminal and increasing its throughput with existing customers and to generate new business. As a long-term supporter of the Port of Bellingham, we encourage their efforts to boost capacity and fortify resources. Reconnecting this vital transportation link lost in 2007 will assure this success.

The immediate results of project completion will be a site capable of expeditiously receiving inbound & outbound rail cars. These investments will play a major role in the creation of a dedicated, modern and resilient facility. Such an asset will enable the movement of cargo through the Port of Bellingham efficiently at an economically favorable cost, reduce carbon emissions and road congestion. The long-term results will be continued economic growth in this region via these first-class facilities. The project has the full support of the BNSF railroad who have provided preliminary design and project cost approval.

When completed, this project will straighten the Puget Sound maritime community. Federal funding for the Port of Bellingham will have a major impact in advancing the long-term health, safety and economic welfare of this area.

Thank you for your consideration of the Port's funding request.

We can be reached at (206) 281-3800 for further questions.

Respectfully,

Jeff Horst

Vice President, Sales & Marketing / Foss Maritime Company

Foss Maritime Company
450 Alaska Way South
Seattle, WA 98104

Telephone: 206-281-3800
Toll Free: 800-426-2885
www.foss.com

I.L.W.U. Local #7
Longshore Division
807 North State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

April 16, 2024

Secretary Peter Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The I.L.W.U. Local #7 Longshore Division supports the Port of Bellingham's grant applications under the USDOT's discretionary grant program for rail connection at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal. We are pleased the Port of Bellingham is continuing with its program of major capital investment, as part of its objective of maximizing future commercial activity at its facility.

This grant would be a significant factor in facilitating the return of rail to the Port of Bellingham's Shipping Terminal, as having rail will help support inbound and outbound cargo. The Port of Bellingham's new rail project, will be a giant step forward in restoring the Shipping terminal to its full potential. The last time the rail service linked to the Bellingham Shipping Terminal was in 2007, over two decades ago. This project has the full support of BNSF railroad, who have provided preliminary project design and cost approval.

Completion of this project will have many benefits. The immediate results of which will be a shipping terminal capable of receiving inbound and the shipping of outbound cargo on rail cars. This project, along with the completion of the already started dock repair and dredge, will make the Port of Bellingham a first class terminal and the only of its kind, this close to international ports in Canada, as well as help with the new limits in vessel traffic, made by the Panama Canal Authority due to the ongoing drought.

This would strengthen the economic outlook for the Port of Bellingham and the surrounding community, by I.L.W.U. Hall expansion that will increase the creation of good paying union jobs. Rail access will also help take pressure off of the already crowded larger ports in the area. This will help increase the efficiency of moving cargo in the Puget Sound.

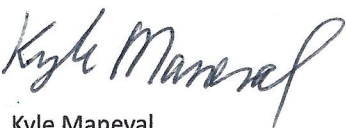
The environmental benefits of this project also help the Port of Bellingham in its goals to reduce carbon emissions. Rail service at the Port of Bellingham Shipping Terminal will help reduce a large number of individual vehicles moving cargo over the freeway and thru the area. That reduced traffic should help to limit possible accidents, and help save wildlife from being struck on the roadways.

The grant will boost the Puget Sound maritime community, and will also have major impact in advancing the long-term health and safety, as well as the environmental and economic welfare of this area.

Thank you for considering the Port of Bellingham's funding request. The federal grant funding is a prerequisite for the project to move forward.

We can be reached at (360) 734-0950 for any questions.

Respectfully,



Kyle Maneval
President
I.L.W.U. Local #7



April 15, 2024

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are the United States general agent of Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. ("MOL"), one of the largest shipping companies in the world. On behalf of MOL, we write in support of the grant application of the Port of Bellingham under the USDOT's discretionary grant program. MOL is impressed that the Port of Bellingham is continuing its extensive capital investment program as part of its objective to maximize future commercial activity at the port, including in the area of international marine transportation of vehicle carriers, by making necessary improvements to its RORO terminal and supporting rail connections.

MOL has a potential interest in the Port of Bellingham. We and MOL work with terminal operators, port authorities, stevedore service companies, and automobile manufacturers (OEMs) to handle international large-scale ocean transportation as a core part of our business. We are always looking for ports with new business opportunities to load/unload cargo for our customers so that we may provide a more diverse range of ocean transportation services. The Port of Bellingham, due to its geographic uniqueness and proximity to the Canadian border, offers a number of potential opportunities, including transportation advantages from our customers' point of view.

Furthermore, we understand a grant will help the port develop the type of rail connection infrastructure that is needed to support cargo operations and expand economic activity, thereby creating an environment conducive to shipping companies like MOL. This rail connection project is expected to transform the port into one that will provide more diverse logistics capabilities for automotive manufacturers. This will surely provide the port with more business opportunities and contribute to the long-term economic competitiveness of the region. It will also strengthen the port's competitiveness by providing more decarbonized transportation options by increasing rail transportation opportunities. MOL believes this rail connection project has the potential to bring many benefits to ocean carriers and to surrounding communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd.
By: MOL (Americas) LLC, as general agent

By: *Y. Suzuki*
Yasuhiro Suzuki, President

PTSC

Pacific Terminal Service Company

May 3, 2024

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

RE: **Support for the Port of Bellingham's USDOT's Grant Applications**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Pacific Terminal Service Company, LLC (PTSC), I am pleased to offer support for the Port of Bellingham's funding request to USDOT's discretionary grant program. We are pleased that the Port is continuing with its program of major capital investments as part of its objective of maximizing future commercial activity with much needed improvements to the Port's Bellingham RORO Terminal and supporting rail connections.

PTSC has a vested interest in the Port of Bellingham as we contract with shipping companies, terminal operators, port authorities, the Pacific Maritime Association, Intermodal Equipment Providers (IEP's), Beneficial Cargo Owners (BCO's) and trucking companies to provide complete stevedoring and container yard services including cargo transportation. Currently, PTSC has a contract in place to perform a wide range of stevedoring services, which includes the operation of cargo handling equipment, including ships' gear, for the loading of ocean-going vessels and handling cargo onto and off vehicles in the Port of Bellingham. To perform the labor, PTSC employs highly skilled and technical ILWU union laborers to provide the services.

We support the Ports grant application as the additional funding will provide necessary rail connection infrastructure to support our ongoing operations, increase economic opportunities, and support needed job growth for companies like PTSC in the Port of Bellingham. The rail connection project will enable the Port to service customers located in the in the Region, Midwest and beyond. This will enhance the region's long-term economic competitiveness. Businesses for Scrap, bulk product and Auto's would use the rail for receiving and delivering cargo if the rail connection would be granted. It would provide the opportunity to increase good paying ILWU union jobs for auto ships, scrap, and other commodities. While giving the Port of Bellingham the advantage of a rail connection could provide additional ad hoc cargo increasing the competitiveness to the Port. It may also provide an environmental benefit by reducing trucks clogging up the Highways and local streets. The reduction in trucks could result in reduced emissions and particulates in the air allowing for the Port to reach its Climate goals. PTSC sees the rail connection project as a as a multi benefit to PTSC's business objectives and a benefit the region.

Thank you for your consideration of the Port of Bellingham's funding request.

Respectfully,

Joe Gregorio Jr.
President and COO
Pacific Terminal Service Company

250 West Wardlow Road
Long Beach, CA 90807