

August 3, 2021

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write to offer my support for the Saint Paul Port Authority's funding request of 4.1 million dollars through the Maritime Administration's Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP). As you consider grant applications for the Maritime Administration's (PIDP), I ask that you prioritize the Saint Paul Port Authority's funding request for rehabilitating the aging dock wall at Mississippi River Barge Terminal 2. Although this project is not located directly within my district, Minnesota's Second Congressional District, the project is critical for maintaining efficient transport of agricultural commodities and other products that are shipped within my district and beyond.

My district is home to the Ports of Savage, the Twin Cities and the upper Midwest's largest inland waterway grain facilities, to other parts of Minnesota and the Midwest and is critical for connecting Minnesota businesses to both domestic and international markets. Many of the barges carrying products through the Ports of Savage first travel to the Saint Paul Port Authority's dock wall at Barge Terminal 2 in Saint Paul. If the deteriorating conditions of the dock wall infrastructure are not addressed, the result could potentially cause shipping delay and reduced capacity for many markets.

The Saint Paul Port Authority's dock wall at Barge Terminal 2 was originally constructed in 1964. Recent engineering inspections have identified several areas of deterioration of the steel sheet pile wall. Without rehabilitation within the next four years, the failing dock will no longer be able to provide safe access to port facilities, maintain current barge volumes, or support projected growth. This will directly impact river freight operations for all terminals within the Saint Paul Harbor and subsequently impact other ports in my district - including ports in South Saint Paul, Wabasha and Red Wing, in addition to the Ports of Savage.

Barge Terminal 2 is located on the Upper Mississippi River and it is a key piece of infrastructure that enables Minnesota industries to compete in worldwide markets. It provides a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable solution for transporting commodities via US Marine Highway 35. As the efficiency of river transport relies on two-way hauls of cargo, where the same barges bringing commodities into the region take our products out to national and international markets, each barge that is unloaded needs to be cleaned and inspected before it can be reloaded with downstream commodities.

The Barge Terminal 2 is essential for providing those services. Should the Barge Terminal 2 dockwall fail, the availability of clean, empty barges for loading commodities going south would be reduced by 50%. This means twice as many barges would be necessary to move the same amount of cargo, since they would only be loaded in one direction. River shipments would likely decrease due to freight rate increases

and more commodities would need to find alternate means of transport, thus creating additional congestion and increased maintenance cost on rail and freeways. Moving empty barges up and down the river or relying on less environmentally friendly modes of transport would also result in a larger carbon footprint and have a negative impact on climate change.

Minnesota's inland water transportation industry continues to generate hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in payroll taxes to the federal and state governments. PIDP grant funding for the Barge Terminal 2 dock wall rehabilitation will support the continued health of our regional economic engine now and into the future. I urge you to give this critical project your full support.

Sincerely,

Angie Craig

Member of Congress