

ROBERT J. WITTMAN

1ST DISTRICT, VIRGINIA



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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 18, 2020

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The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write in support of the Port of Virginia's application to the 2020 Port Infrastructure Development Grant Program to increase on-terminal capacity at their Norfolk International Terminal (NIT) facility in Norfolk, Virginia. If awarded, the funds will help increase safety, improve efficiency, and allow the Port of Virginia to continue to provide excellent service to port customers. I request your utmost consideration of this application. It is a priority for me and my constituents in the 1st Congressional District.

The Port of Virginia is one of the Commonwealth's most powerful economic engines. On an annual basis, the Port is responsible for nearly 400,000 jobs and \$92 billion in spending across the Commonwealth and generates 7.5% of the Gross State Product. The Port provides significant economic support not only to Virginia but also across the South, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest supporting hundreds of businesses in North Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia.

The Port of Virginia serves as a catalyst for commerce throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and across the country. To expand its commercial impact, the Port seeks to use this funding to optimize its central rail yard at NIT. The Port's arrival and departure of cargo by rail is the largest of any port on the Eastern Seaboard, and the proposed optimization will involve the construction of two new rail bundles containing four tracks each for a total of 10,700 additional feet of working track. This project will improve efficiency, allow more cargo to move through the facility, improve the safety of operation, remove more large trucks from the highways, and generate additional economic development throughout the region. The application requests \$25 million toward a \$44 million project (\$18,967,00 Commonwealth investment) with a BCR of 3.1. Moreover, the expansion project will nearly double the 368,000 annual container capacity of the existing central railyard needed to keep up with future calculated rail demand. 34% of the Port of Virginia's volume arrives or departs by rail, with an estimated increase to 40% rail activity in the coming years, which greatly impacts the Midwestern United States.

The Port of Virginia is the only U.S. Eastern Seaboard port with a Congressional authorization for 55-foot channels. This project adds to the Port's capacity and increases its ability to safely handle the largest ships in the Atlantic trade, while ensuring sustainable growth throughout its network.

I am confident that this investment will have a positive economic impact on Virginia, and I request that you give this proposal thoughtful attention. Thank you for your service on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert F. Wittman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert F. Wittman
Member of Congress