

October 13, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) is writing to express its strong support for public seaports' applications for the FY 2017 Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grants. Direct and sustainable multimodal funding for freight infrastructure was AAPA's top priority for the FAST Act.

Founded in 1912, AAPA is the unified and collective voice of the seaport industry in the Americas. AAPA empowers port authorities, maritime industry partners and service providers to serve their global customers and create economic and social value for their communities. Our activities, resources and partnerships connect, inform and unify seaport leaders and maritime professionals in all segments of the industry around the western hemisphere. Our letter today is on behalf of our U.S. members.

Last year, AAPA and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) released the [*State of Freight II – Implementing the FAST Act and Beyond*](#). This timely report highlights the work state DOTs and seaports have engaged in since implementation of the FAST Act to develop and finalize state freight plans, in coordination with state freight advisory committees. For example, the survey found that 71 percent of states have state freight plans that they are actively working to make FAST Act compliant. In addition, 57 percent of states have targeted more than 6,200 freight projects for inclusion in their state freight plans, while 35 percent have identified a combined \$259 billion in costs for their state's freight plan projects.

Ports are integral partners in developing these state freight plans and a national multimodal freight plan. *The State of Freight II* builds off AAPA's 2015 [*State of Freight*](#) report, which identified \$28.9 billion in needed freight landside infrastructure investments by 2025.

American seaports and their private-sector partners annually spend more than \$30 billion collectively in marine terminal capital improvements that help handle freight and cruise passengers more efficiently. INFRA grants will provide ports with needed funding for multimodal projects that support America's transportation system and freight network. States have already begun to submit their state freight plans in anticipation of the December 4 grant application deadline. USDOT should already be seeing port-related projects of regional and national significance that would benefit from INFRA grants to make improvements to America's transportation infrastructure.

The governments of Canada and Mexico are making large investments in their freight transportation systems, including their seaports. Goods imported and exported do not need to go through U.S. ports. If we do not maintain our infrastructure, more freight will flow through neighboring countries. In order to keep these important maritime jobs at home, the U.S. government must make significant investments in seaport infrastructure.

As the Department of Transportation begins to evaluate the applications for the INFRA grants, we strongly urge you to focus on seaports and the last mile freight-related projects, including gateways and corridor projects, to help maintain and expand the maritime infrastructure. These projects support U.S. exports and imports, which are vital to our nation's economy, standard of living and U.S. jobs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt J. Nagle", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kurt J. Nagle
President and CEO