

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1012

March 15, 2021

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

Re: Northeast Georgia Inland Port Project Hall County, Georgia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Georgia Ports Authority's USDOT INFRA grant application for the Northeast Georgia Inland Port project in Hall County, Georgia.

This regional partnership project between Georgia Ports Authority and Norfolk Southern Railway will improve multi-modal connections for the movement of containers through the Port of Savannah to/from the northeast Georgia and metro Atlanta region. It will reduce truck traffic and commuter delays on the regional/national roadway network, enhance the region's economic competitiveness and opportunities for global trade, and combine efforts by local, state, regional, and national stakeholders to improve the overall multi-modal transportation system.

Freight movement to and from port facilities in the Savannah area is critical to the local, state, regional, and national economy. Over the last fifteen years, Georgia Ports Authority has been the fastest growing major container port in the country. From calendar year 2018 to calendar year 2020, container traffic at the Garden City Terminal grew 7.6% and has grown 66.1% since 2010. The Savannah Harbor is currently being deepened to serve newer, larger vessels calling on the U.S. East Coast since the completion of the Panama Canal expansion in 2016. These vessels offer greater economies of scale to importers and exporters alike, but the additional cargo each ship carries also places incremental stress on local infrastructure.

The infrastructure improvements funded by this grant application and to be undertaken by the Georgia Ports Authority in partnership with the Norfolk Southern Railway, and Hall County, will help relieve stress on infrastructure created by this new phenomenon in global commerce on East Coast ports (and in certain instances West Coast ports) by allowing GPA to continue bringing transportation risk mitigation for the nation's supply chain, as demonstrated in 2015. The project will introduce high-volume and environmentally friendly freight rail transportation alternative to an area that has relied solely on highways that are experiencing growing volumes of congestion. Local commuters and businesses will benefit greatly from the enhanced movement of maritime cargo.

Furthermore, this project will create the immediate and long-term jobs, expanded economic development, and critical safety and environmental improvements intended by the INFRA programs, while insuring the maximum return on previous federal and state investments. The investments for this project will be made in a rural location

with three Qualified Opportunity Zones and facility activities will provide direct benefits to those zones including employment opportunities.

I am pleased to support this application for participation in this grant program, and appreciate your time and thoughtful consideration. It will yield significant long-term economic benefits for Georgia, and the Southeastern United States region, as well as the entire nation. If you have any questions about this letter or if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (770) 694-7828.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Warnock". The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal line at the end.

Reverend Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator