

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write to thank you for your commitment to improving our nation's freight railroad systems. Freight rail helps deliver economic growth, supports job creation, provides crucial environmental benefits, and increases our nation's productivity and competitiveness. We are also grateful that President Biden's American Jobs Plan recommends a historic \$80 billion investment in our nation's rail networks.

As Members of Congress representing states whose economies are heavily reliant on the efficient movement of goods in the Northeast Corridor, we wish to highlight the critical importance of the Cross Harbor Freight Program (CHFP) to the greater New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut metropolitan area.

CHFP will finally connect the region to the national freight rail grid by removing trucks from our streets and diverting them to the underutilized rail network. It will change the way we move goods throughout our region for the better, with economic, environmental, health, safety, and cost-saving benefits for millions of people.

The New York metropolitan area represents the largest consumer market in the nation, with over 320 million tons of freight transported through our region annually. However, New York City is the only major city in the world that is not directly connected to its national freight rail network. Without a key rail link, the region has a tremendous modal imbalance compared to most American metropolitan areas. For instance, trucks move over 90 percent of the region's freight, compared to a national average of 60 percent. The figure moves closer to 95 percent for goods moving across the New York and New Jersey Harbor. By contrast, rail handles less than 10 percent—with most freight arriving by rail at points west of New York and relying on trucks to reach their final destinations. This figure is substantially below the national average for metropolitan areas.

The region's severe highway congestion caused by this imbalance undermines economic prosperity, harms public health, and damages our environment. More than one billion tons of freight move

through the greater New York region each year primarily by truck, with truck congestion adding an estimated \$2.5 billion annually to the cost of delivering goods to consumers and businesses. It costs as much to move goods from New Jersey to Manhattan as it does to move them 500 miles or more in some other areas of the United States. In the next 20 years, freight to, from and through this region is expected to increase by at least 37 percent – beyond the capacity of our roadways, putting a lid on economic development and further damaging public health.

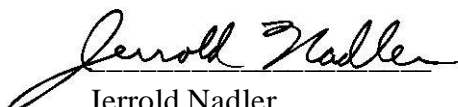
In addition to reducing congestion on roads and bridges, CHFP would fundamentally help improve air quality, reduce asthma, and allow better movement of emergency vehicles by removing an estimated 1,800 trucks from harbor crossings per day. It would also create a necessary redundancy in this critical transportation system, thereby fortifying a national security vulnerability.

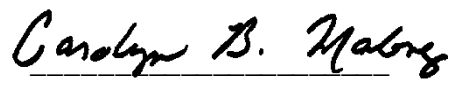
We are grateful for the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) longtime support for this project and the American Jobs Plan’s commitment to providing guaranteed, dedicated funding for critical large-scale, multimodal projects like CHFP by recommending \$44 billion for projects of regional and national significance. As you have stated, the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program—which supports projects of regional and national significance—is a tremendous opportunity to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure in a way that positions American communities for success in the future. CHFP received one of the first INFRA grants in 2016. This funding has allowed Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) to conduct the Tier II Environmental Impact Study and complementary advanced planning and engineering work. This followed the PANYNJ and FHWA’s completion of a draft Tier I Environmental Impact Statement in November 2014.

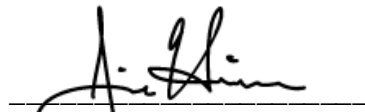
We look forward to working with you to further enhance federal support for projects that are too big or complex for states to address on their own by targeting funding and investments more effectively. We would also like to cordially invite you to visit the CHFP project sites to better understand the importance of the project to our region and the urgent need for continued federal investments.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. We look forward to our continued collaboration as we work to improve our nation’s infrastructure and Build Back Better.


Sincerely,


Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



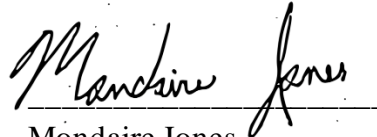
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



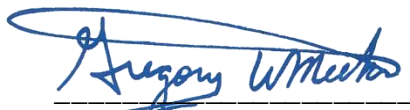
Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress




Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



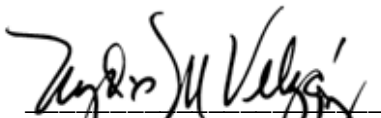
Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress



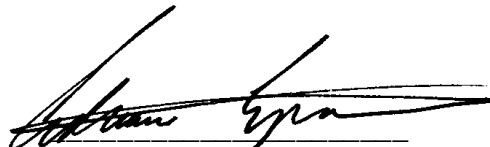
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



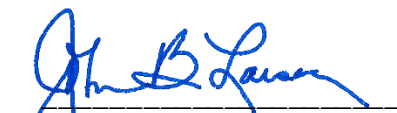
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress




Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



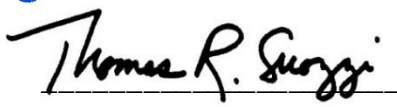
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



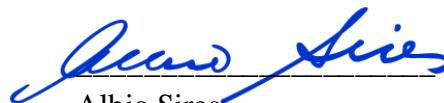
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



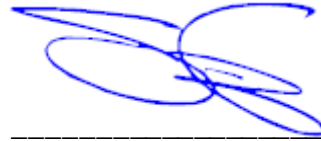
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
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Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress