

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 FY 2017 TIGER grants. AAPA has been a strong advocate for the program since its inception in 2009. TIGER has made real improvements in our nation's maritime transportation system and needed investments in our multimodal freight infrastructure.

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.

One of the continued values of TIGER from a maritime perspective is that it leverages considerable private, state and local investments in seaport infrastructure. Since 2009, TIGER grants have leveraged over \$782 million in maritime projects alone. Ports are incubators for public-private partnerships, and the combination of tools and the availability of TIGER funding will allow our nation's ports to facilitate and finance projects that might otherwise lay dormant.

For example, these grants have helped fund seaport intermodal connectors and facilities (including rail, road and short sea shipping); wharf and dock rehabilitation and expansion; improvements in yards, piers, breakwaters and cranes; and improvements overall to rail movements throughout the United States to improve freight mobility.

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. TIGER grant investments in port projects help to move these projects forward. In addition to the ability to leverage additional funding, TIGER has been extremely valuable because it is multimodal, which means it funds a variety of transportation modes and projects that are beneficial to ports, the surrounding communities and our national supply chain.

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, and we risk losing valuable supply chain jobs. AAPA's 2015 State of Freight survey identified \$28.9 billion in needed freight landside infrastructure investments by 2025. TIGER is the primary federal funding opportunity for ports to make landside improvements.

As the Department of Transportation begins to evaluate the applications for FY 2017 TIGER grants, we urge you to provide 25 percent or more of available funding for seaports' freight-related projects. These projects will help maintain and expand the maritime infrastructure that is so critical to 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