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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1001

April 25, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my/our strong support for the Georgia Ports Authority's USDOT CRISI grant application for the Colonel's Island Rail Improvements Project in Glynn County, Georgia. This project will construct a new rail yard that is needed to handle the growing volume of U.S. automotive exports and imports moving through the Port.

Colonel's Island Auto Terminal presently has 637 acres that are leased or sold to auto processors or OEM's. There is an additional 742 acres available that have been permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the development of new Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro/Ro) business. The terminal is located 2.5 miles from Interstate 95 (North/South) via U.S. Highway 17, and just one hour south of Interstate 16 (East/West) and one hour north of Interstate 10 (East/West). The facility is also served by two Class 1 railroads, Norfolk Southern and CSX, and one Class 2 railroad, Genesee & Wyoming. Several auto manufacturing plants throughout the U.S. are directly connected to Colonel's Island by way of these rail networks allowing thousands of new U.S. made vehicles to be exported around the world each month.

As a dedicated Ro/Ro facility, the terminal is the second busiest port in the U.S. for total Ro/Ro cargo. Owned by the Georgia Ports Authority, the facility operates with just three berths and one rail yard at this time. Due to high utilization of the existing berths and overall volume growth, a fourth berth is in the process of being constructed thanks in large part to federal funding through the 2021 PIDP grant program. Colonel's Island Terminal ranks not only among the nation's largest auto facilities but is also one of the country's most efficiently managed and environmentally conscious. By adding a second rail yard, the facility can foster sustainable growth with long-range environmental stewardship and safety at the forefront.

The infrastructure improvements funded by this grant application and to be undertaken by the Georgia Ports Authority will allow for the future growth of business in the State of Georgia and the region. Additionally, this project will help create immediate and long-term family wage jobs and expand economic development intended by the CRISI programs while ensuring maximum return on previous federal and state investments.

This grant will yield significant long-term economic benefits for Georgia, and the Southeastern United States region, as well as the entire nation. I hope you will give full and fair consideration to the Georgia Ports Authority's application while continuing to abide by applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl L. 'Buddy' Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress