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April 28, 2009

The Honorable Raymond LaHood
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

Public Law 111-5, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), provided the Department of Transportation with \$1.5 billion to be awarded through a new surface transportation competitive grant program. This new program provides the Department and the nation with a unique opportunity to competitively finance significant transportation infrastructure projects, regardless of transport mode, that will enhance national, regional, or metropolitan mobility, while putting Americans back to work.

This program is particularly important to addressing the diverse needs and unique transportation demands of the states and territories in the non-contiguous trades. These states and territories heavily depend on maritime and intermodal transportation infrastructure which has, historically, received little federal investment when compared to federal spending for our nation's highway or aviation infrastructure. I urge you to ensure that the maritime and intermodal needs of these states and territories will be given significant consideration in this new grant program, both on the water side as well as the land side of the ports. Additionally, I hope that this grant program will be used, in part, to fund port projects which traditionally have received little federal investment, despite their significant economic and military importance to our nation.

For example, the Port of Anchorage is vital to our national defense. The expansion project that is underway will provide future economic opportunities and further strengthen the military and diplomatic mission of the United States. The Port of Anchorage is one of only 19 ports designated by the Department of Defense as a Strategic Port. There are five military bases strategically located in Alaska (Elmendorf AFB, Ft. Richardson, Eielson AFB, Ft. Wainwright, and Ft. Greely),

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and the Port is essential in serving the thousands of Army and Air Force personnel, that call Alaska home. Alaska is playing a larger role in the training of military personnel with more than 2 million acres of training grounds, where troops can train with close air support in live fire exercises. Without the Port of Anchorage, these key military bases and activities would be out of business.

As the focus of the strategic location of our military forces changes, we must ensure that states have the critical infrastructure necessary to support military movement. The State of Hawaii and the Port of Anchorage are each seeking \$179 million in stimulus funds for their port and intermodal expansion plans. I fully support these requests for improvements on the water side as well as the land side of the ports, and hope that you will agree these projects are worthy investments.

Your efforts and those of your agencies are essential to the ARRA's effectiveness in creating jobs and promoting our nation's economic recovery. Investments in key ports such as those in Hawaii and Alaska will provide long term economic and strategic benefits.

Aloha,



DANIEL K. INOUE
United States Senator

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