



Anchorage Port Commission:

Captain Ron Ward, Chair
Mr. Aves Thompson, Vice-Chair
Ms. Peggy Rotan, Commissioner
Mr. Chris Manculich, Commissioner

Mr. Mike Robbins, Commissioner
Captain Paul Mehler, Commissioner
Mr. Kevin Mackey, Commissioner
Ms. Stephanie Kesler, Commissioner

September 27, 2023

The Honorable Mary Peltola
153 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Mast
2182 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Peltola and Congressman Mast:

On behalf of the Anchorage Port Commission, I would like to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Port Infrastructure Permitting Empowerment Act. Our commission regulates the operation of terminal and transportation facilities at the Port of Alaska by recommending to the Anchorage Assembly an appropriate tariff structure for covering port operating and capital needs. We advocate for the importance of this port as a part of the larger national and international port industry.

We are united behind sensible government policies that protect the environment while also letting the port industry do what it does best – move things and people quickly, efficiently, and cleanly. Since the coronavirus pandemic, supply chain resilience has been rightly recognized as a critical issue for national security, economic vitality, and global competitiveness. The American maritime industry is grateful for the record levels of federal funding for port infrastructure, but this money will only go so far without common sense reforms to federal permitting rules.

The Port Infrastructure Permitting Empowerment Act would go a long way towards expediting the approval of critical port infrastructure projects from Alaska to Florida. The bill would cut the red tape that now prevents the Maritime Administration (MARAD) from quickly approving categorical exclusions for road and rail projects. It would allow port authorities to avail themselves of the services of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (FPISC), a new federal agency dedicated to keeping the permitting process moving. And it would ensure port authorities have ample time to draft competitive applications for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) when the program's guidelines are delayed by bureaucracy.

Your introduction of this legislation shows that Congress can find bipartisan solutions to problems that affect all Americans, regardless of party. Port infrastructure is integral to the wellbeing of every American, Democrat or Republican, coastal or inland. Port infrastructure supports over 30 million American jobs and one quarter of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. Expediting the approval of new infrastructure projects will lead to more efficient cargo and passenger movement and create more jobs.

The bipartisan introduction of this bill signals to committee leaders, congressional leadership, and the American people that infrastructure improvement, the maritime industry, and permitting reform are bipartisan causes. We stand ready to assist you in building support for this legislation and making it the law of the land.

Sincerely,

Stephen Ribuffo

for Captain Ron Ward
Commission Chair