

August 17, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write today in support of the Port of Virginia's application for a Port Infrastructure Development (PID) grant to complete its Norfolk International Terminal's (NIT) Central Rail Yard (CRY) expansion project. This funding will build on the investments the Port has made across its two largest terminals, the NIT and Virginia International Gateway (VIG), to expand on-terminal rail capacity at NIT – increasing the Port's competitiveness and allowing it to continue to serve manufacturers and farmers in Virginia and across the country.

The Port of Virginia is requesting approximately \$25 million matched with nearly \$19 million in state investment for a \$44 million project. The project would entail the construction of two new rail bundles containing four tracks each for approximately 10,700 additional feet of working track. The new rail bundles are projected to generate \$112.1 million in total economic benefits. For example, the project would reduce truck miles traveled by 2.45 million, translating into reduced congestion and emissions; time saved for motor carriers; and increased safety.

Further, an expansion of the NIT CRY is critical for the Port of Virginia to ensure it can keep pace with forecasted rail growth and maintain its expected level of service to the Midwest, Ohio Valley, and other inland markets. Without this investment, the Port's export capacity would be constrained, limiting U.S. manufacturers and farmers' access to the global market.

The Port of Virginia is a major gateway for U.S. inland and Midwest markets. The Port handles a higher percentage of rail cargo than any other port on the East Coast. Thirty-four percent of the cargo processed at the Port arrives and departs via rail. The NIT CRY Expansion project would double the 368,000 annual container capacity of the existing CRY – 200,000 of which is projected to consist of exports.

I ask that you give the Port of Virginia's application for a PID grant every appropriate consideration. This project would have significant economic benefits for Virginia and the manufacturers and producers across the country that rely on the Port to deliver their products around the world. The Port's rail project will also have significantly positive transportation, environmental, and safety impacts that are worthy of consideration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark R. Warner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator