

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

April 4, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the Port of Benton's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program. The Port of Benton is seeking \$9,560,000 for the Port of Benton White Bluffs Southern Connection Rail Line project.

Located in Richland, Washington, the Port of Benton includes 250 acres of waterfront on the Columbia River and two airports, among other resources. It directly supports 3,200 jobs and manages about \$90 million in assets, including 16 miles of rail. Despite central Washington's status as an agriculture and clean energy center of activity, there is not a multimodal hub in the Tri-Cities area that can provide logistical services for central Washington to support the Northwest Seaport Alliance gateways of Seattle and Tacoma. The White Bluffs Southern Connection Rail Line, which is managed by the Port of Benton, is facing safety issues like failed ties, worn-out wye track, and heavier freight rail on elevated curves. These factors have been barriers to the Port establishing the desired central Washington multimodal hub.

If successful, the Port of Benton will use RAISE grant funds to address the White Bluffs Southern Connection Rail Line's safety issues. By providing a central location for shippers in the Pacific Northwest and beyond to store and transport goods, the project will stimulate economic activity by attracting businesses seeking efficient logistics solutions. This will directly create jobs in warehousing, transportation, advanced manufacturing green fertilizer production, and related services. Additionally, this project will remove trucks off the road and support state and national clean energy goals.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the Port of Benton's application to the RAISE grant program.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell

United States Senator