



# Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

Guiding the Future of Transportation for the Twin Ports Area

May 3, 2024

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

Rear Admiral Ann C. Phillips  
Maritime Administrator  
Maritime Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**Subject: MPO Support for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority's  
MARAD Port Infrastructure Development Grant Application**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Rear Admiral Phillips:

On behalf of the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) and our Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC), I am writing to express our strong support for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority's (DSPA) application for \$33.8M in grant funding through the Port Infrastructure Development Program to help fund the 2024 Duluth Port Terminal Expansion project. This grant, should it be awarded, will be matched by \$8.45M in secured state grant and local funding.

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Duluth-Superior area, the MIC is charged with transportation planning for all modes of travel within our planning area, including multimodal freight and related port and economic development interests. The Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC) is one of three advisory committees to the MIC, and is recognized as a national planning model to address complex and often controversial port-, harbor-, and estuary-centered issues through stakeholder collaboration and long-time institutional involvement.

The 2024 Duluth Port Intermodal Terminal Expansion and Rehabilitation Project is located within our planning area and its implementation would support many of the goals and recommendations long identified by both the MIC and the HTAC as priority needs in our plans and studies, including the *Duluth-Superior Landside Port Access Study*, *Duluth-Superior Port Land Use Plan*, *Northwest Douglas County Freight Movement Study*, *Duluth-Superior Truck Route Study*, and our long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), *Sustainable Choices 2045*.

The proposed project would implement several recommended improvements from our planning initiatives, including an urgently-needed rehabilitation of port infrastructure by reconstructing dock walls at two port facilities and creating many acres of new laydown space. This would improve current Port operations, allow for their future expansion, and strengthen supply chain options for regional industries, consistent with the MIC's long-range goals related to multimodal freight and mobility.

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MIC Letter of Support for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority's  
MARAD Port Infrastructure Development Grant Application

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Furthermore, the proposed project would contribute to meeting some of the economic vitality and equity goals in our long-range MTP. The improvements to port infrastructure and service capabilities made by DSPA would support the growth of good-paying industrial jobs in the Lincoln Park area of Duluth, a low-income and racially diverse neighborhood that has historically borne disparate adverse economic and health impacts from previous transportation projects.

In short, the initiatives proposed in this grant application are supported by input we've received for many years from community stakeholders, and would advance several of the MIC's key goals in regard to multimodal freight, mobility, economic development, equity, and port development. We support this project and appreciate your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,



Ron Chicka, AICP  
MIC Director  
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Cc: Wayne Boucher, MIC Policy Board Co-chair (MN)  
Nick Baker, MIC Policy Board Co-chair (WI)  
Ed Anderson, HTAC Chair

