



# Saint Louis County

Administration • 100 North Fifth Avenue West, Room 202 • Duluth, MN 55802  
Phone: (218) 726-2448 • [www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov)

**Kevin Z. Gray**  
County Administrator

April 29, 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

RE: Duluth Seaway Port Authority Grant Application - MARAD Port Infrastructure Development

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Rear Admiral Phillips:

I write in support of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority's (DSPA) application for \$33.8M in grant funding through the Port Infrastructure Development Program for 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.

The Port of Duluth-Superior is an important asset not only for St. Louis County, but for a vast region covering much of the Midwest interior of the United States and Canada. The DSPA and their partners have strategically invested in port infrastructure and operations to meet the needs of various industries by providing full-service supply chain options. The DSPA owns and operates Clure Public Marine Terminal on Rice's Point in Duluth, which falls within the larger Lincoln Park neighborhood. Improvements to port infrastructure and service capabilities made by DSPA support the growth of well-paying industrial jobs in St. Louis County and strengthen supply chain options for regional industries.

The 2024 Duluth Port Intermodal Terminal Expansion project includes 3 main components: (1) reconstruction of 625 linear feet of the Berth 11 dock at the Clure Public Marine Terminal (2) demolishing the former grain elevators at the Duluth Lake Port facility to create 7.5 acres of new laydown space; and (3) reconstruction of 1150 linear feet of the Duluth Lake Port dock. This urgently needed rehabilitation of port infrastructure will allow for future expansion at the port, which last year handled an impressive 31.7 million tons of cargo, including iron ore, cement, durum wheat, spring wheat, oats, beet pulp pellets, and breakbulk, project and containerized cargo.

St. Louis County is home to nearly 200,000 residents and is the largest county in Minnesota. We are a county rich in natural resources, recreation and tourism, manufacturing, and retail. Our size and location make us a regional hub for Northeastern Minnesota and extending across to the Midwest and Canada.

The Port's importance to St. Louis County – and our entire country – cannot be overstated. Historians have said the U.S. wouldn't have won World War II without the iron ore that was mined

*"An Equal Opportunity Employer"*

on the Iron Range *and then shipped from the Duluth Harbor*. Today, how that iron ore is used has changed, but the efficiency and importance of the connection remains. Mines in St. Louis County still produce 85 percent of the country's domestic iron, and most of it is shipped out the Port of Duluth-Superior. Mining is just one of the industries supported by DSPA in addition to being a major multi-modal hub supporting shipments of agriculture and forest products, wind turbine components, and other energy-related, heavy lift cargo. The Clure Public Marine Terminal, owned and operated by DSPA, is the only heavy-lift and general cargo terminal on the west end of Lake Superior.

The 2024 Duluth Port Intermodal Terminal Expansion project is necessary to add much-needed capacity and efficiency to Port operations to both build on the strength of our regional economy and to support vital industries, such as manufacturing, agriculture, and energy, for our nation. We strongly support this project and appreciate your consideration of the application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Gray', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Gray  
County Administrator  
St. Louis County