MARIA CANTWELL
WASHINGTON

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
FINANCE
INDIAN AFFAIRS
SMALL BUSINESS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–4705

June 1, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Stephen Carmel
Administrator
U.S. Maritime Administrator
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy and Administrator Carmel,

I am writing in support of The Northwest Seaport Alliance's application to the Department of Transportation's Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP). The Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA) is seeking $9.12 million for its Washington United Terminal Infrastructure Reliability project.

The NWSA is a marine cargo operating partnership between the ports of Seattle and Tacoma, serving as a premier West Coast gateway for international trade across the Pacific Northwest and the nation. Washington United Terminal (WUT), a busy international container terminal in the Port of Tacoma, is a cornerstone of this trade network, providing essential access to international markets for billions of dollars' worth of exports from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and beyond. NWSA cargo activity supports 52,000 jobs and $13.9 billion in economic activity in Washington state, and in 2025 alone the NWSA managed $67 billion of waterborne trade with 180 global trading partners. However, aging asphalt at WUT cannot adequately support the heavy rubber-tired gantry (RTG) cranes used for cargo handling, causing pavement deterioration that compromises safety and operational efficiency. Additionally, the terminal's existing bollards cannot accommodate the larger container ships that increasingly define modern global shipping, threatening the terminal's long-term competitiveness.

If successful, the NWSA will use funding to address both issues. WUT will construct reinforced concrete travel lanes at the cargo yard and along rail tracks to support RTG crane operations, including five new RTGs scheduled for delivery in 2028. These improvements will utilize the yard’s space more efficiently and increase cargo handling efficiency. The project will also upgrade 18 bollards at two berths to safely accommodate larger cargo vessels. Combined with planned harbor deepening efforts, these investments are expected to increase the terminal's annual throughput and cargo handling capacity by approximately 47% by 2030.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the NWSA's application to the PIDP.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell

United States Senator