

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

December 15, 2023

The Honorable Shailen Bhatt  
Administrator  
Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E.,  
Washington, D.C., 20590

Dear Administrator Bhatt,

I am writing in support of the Northwest Seaport Alliance's application to the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program. The Northwest Seaport Alliance is seeking \$24,500,000 for repair and upgrading of the Wapato Creek Culvert.

The Wapato Creek Culvert is part of the Pierce County Terminal in Tacoma, Washington and is located under a busy international terminal in the Tacoma tideflats. The Wapato Creek Culvert is specifically located at the intersection of many critical infrastructure components, and it conveys creek and tidal waters beneath Pierce County Terminal. The Wapato Creek Culvert reached the end of its useful life in 2020 and the Port of Tacoma has since spent \$472,557 in assessing and repairing it.

If successful in its application, the Northwest Seaport Alliance will use this funding to completely repair the culvert and upgrade it to improve the safety of the Pierce County Terminal. The repairs will expand upon recent restoration projects conducted by the Port of Tacoma and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians aimed at reducing local flooding risks, protecting terminal operations, and improving aquatic connectivity between Wapato Creek and Commencement Bay. Finally, the current Wapato Creek Culvert is a poor conveyance for salmonids accessing upstream habitat, including Chinook salmon, steelhead, and trout. The reconstruction of this culvert will improve fish passage and amplify the impacts of past aquatic habitat projects on upstream Wapato Creek.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the Northwest Seaport Alliance's application to the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation Program.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator