



Janet T. Mills  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
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AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

August 30, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to send you the following letter in support of the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) application for funding through the Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program. Through their application MaineDOT is requesting \$10 million to assist with operational costs of the Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS).

The MSFS provides public transportation to the rural island communities of Frenchboro, Islesboro, Matinicus, North Haven, Swan's Island and Vinalhaven. These communities depend on reliable, affordable and sustainable ferry service for access to jobs, education and services, as well as for emergency medical transports.

Like many industries over the past couple of years, the MSFS has experienced challenges. Fuel prices, increased vessel maintenance needs due to an aging fleet and lack of crew associated with COVID-19 and the global maritime workforce shortage have led to increased operating costs and missed trips.

This funding, if awarded, would help relieve the impact of increased operating costs, support new programs aimed at recruiting and retaining vessel crews, improving communication to customers through implementation of a new communication system and on-board Wi-Fi and electronic messaging, and expansion of online vehicle reservations.

I fully support MaineDOT's application for the Rural Communities Program. This funding would enhance a crucial transportation service to the Maine island communities served by the MSFS. Please do not hesitate to contact myself, or MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note, with any questions.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills  
Governor



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