

**TOWN OF ISLESBORO**  
P.O. Box 76 • 150 Main Road • Islesboro, Maine 04848  
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Janet R. Anderson  
Town Manager  
manager@townofislesboro.com

August 25, 2022

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

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Federal Transit Administration FY2022 Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program

Dear U.S. Secretary Buttigieg:

We, the Select Board and Town Manager of the Town of Islesboro, Maine, write in support of the Maine State Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) submission for the FY2022 Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program for funding to construction a replacement for our current ferry, the *Margaret Chase Smith*.

Our town is located approximately three miles off the mid-coast of Maine. The island is fourteen miles long and is narrow and home to more than 600 full time residents. In the summer the population increases by several thousand.

We have two small grocery stores on the island, three boatyards, a community Health Center, EMS and Fire Services, a K-12 Central School, and a small assisted living facility. Our school is a "magnet" school, with mainland students attending by riding our ferry to and from the island Monday to Friday. Further information can be found on our website: [www.townofislesboro.com](http://www.townofislesboro.com).

During the summer, our ferry runs nine round trips a day from and to Islesboro. During the off-season there are seven round trips. Morning runs are filled with contractors and service providers, as well as USPS, UPS, local building delivery services, and, during the school year, students. Truck traffic is regular and heavy, as we have no gravel pit on the island. All our fuel comes over on the ferry. Residents of the island regularly use the ferry service for food shopping, medical appointments, medication pick up (while we have a health center we do not have a pharmacy), veterinary services, hardware and building supplies, and general shopping. The ferry also provides, when necessary, EMS services and spends the night here on the island to be available in the event of a medical emergency. In short, the ferry is essential to Islesboro's continued existence as a robust and viable community.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the pandemic has caused significant problems for ferry services, as well as public transportation in general. Reliability is an important component of the service provided by MSFS. The consequences of the pandemic have created serious staffing and personnel issues, and, not surprisingly, issues with the reliability of service as well. In addition, personnel costs and the cost of operating and maintaining the MSFS fleet of vessels present significant issues of continued affordability of the service to our island's residents. Affordability is a critical issue for our town, particularly in regard to our ability to attract younger families and new residents to our community and have them stay once here.

We unanimously support MaineDOT's proposal for the Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program. This opportunity presented by the FTA's Ferry Programs under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Program and Consolidated Appropriates Act will support necessary and critical transportation services to our community and the other islands served by the MSFS all of which constitute a vital part of what is the State of Maine.

Sincerely,



Janet R. Anderson

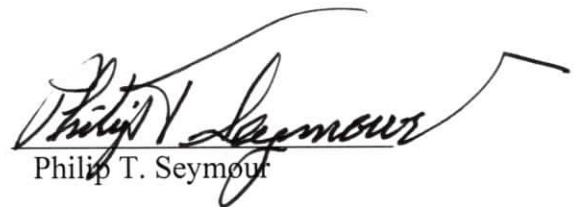
**Islesboro Select Board**



Gabriel I. Pendleton, Chair



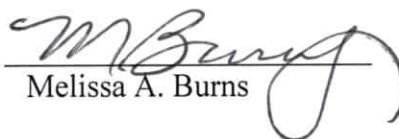
Shey V. Conover



Philip T. Seymour



Lauren K. Bruce



Melissa A. Burns

Sincerely,