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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 1, 2020

COMMITTEES

ARMED SERVICES
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The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Re: Maritime Administration (MARAD) Port Infrastructure Development Grants
Applicant: North Carolina Ports
Project: *Container Gate Innovation & Access*

Dear Secretary Chao,

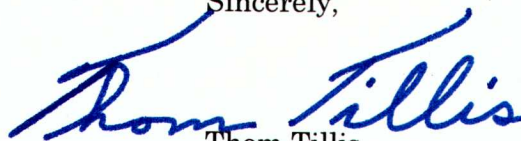
I am pleased to support the grant application submitted by North Carolina Ports for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration Port Infrastructure Development Program in the amount of \$20,073,244.

North Carolina Ports (NC Ports) indicates its *Container Gate Innovation & Access* project is part of a planned container yard expansion at the Port of Wilmington. Grant funding will be used to build a new container gate complex to relieve a bottleneck of container truck traffic currently occurring at the gate's checkpoints and throughout the surrounding surface streets. Addressing this bottleneck will not only relieve an immediate congestion issue, but it will also allow the Port to address forecasted growth.

It is my understanding that the new gate complex will deliver enhanced security features, automated access control via an electronic appointment booking system, improved wireless connectivity, and the integration of Optical Character Recognition and Weigh-in-Motion Sensors, which will allow drivers to enter and exit the port without stopping for manual processing. The proposed improvements will streamline container traffic flow throughout the terminal and open up additional yard storage capacity, which will increase the Port's throughput capacity by approximately 220 percent.

Investing in our nation's ports is critical for economic growth, international trade, national defense, and safety, and I thank you for your full consideration of NC Ports' application. Please feel free to contact my Raleigh office at 919-856-4630 if you have questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Thom Tillis
U.S. Senator

TRT/lm

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