



5315 22nd Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98107

Charles P. Costanzo
General Counsel & Vice President – Pacific Region

PHONE: 203.980.3051
EMAIL: ccostanzo@americanwaterways.com

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of The American Waterways Operators (AWO), I am pleased to offer our support of the Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant application for the East Marginal Way Improvement Project.

The U.S. tugboat, towboat, and barge industry is a vital segment of America's transportation system. The industry safely and efficiently moves more than 760 million tons of cargo each year, including more than 60 percent of U.S. export grain, energy sources, and other bulk commodities that are the building blocks of the U.S. economy. The fleet consists of nearly 5,500 tugboats and towboats and over 31,000 barges. These vessels transit 25,000 miles of inland and intracoastal waterways; the Great Lakes; and the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts. Tugboats also provide essential services including ship docking, tanker escort, and bunkering in ports and harbors around the country.

Sixteen AWO member companies are headquartered in Washington, and more than a dozen others operate tugboats and barges on Washington waters. In 2017, US companies exported nearly \$17 billion worth of goods through the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), a partnership between the ports of Seattle and Tacoma. Towing vessels serve the critical function of transporting commodities, supporting construction projects, and assisting ships in the Port of Seattle and throughout the region.

East Marginal Way is Seattle's most critical freight corridor. It runs the length of South Downtown (SODO) and connects Port of Seattle terminals, freight rail yards, industrial businesses, and the national highway system. Given the significant level of freight volume and other daily usage on East Marginal, the roadway is in need of critical investment to allow continued accommodation of heavy hauling freight activity.

As a critical last-mile connector, improving this roadway is key to the economic health of the Port of Seattle and maritime transportation in the entire region. Its improvement will directly

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Page 2

benefit the 28 AWO member companies that operate in Washington's waters and the 58,400 jobs supported by the NWSA. It will also allow for greater utilization of the efficiencies of maritime transportation, including eased congestion, greater fuel efficiency, cleaner air, and reduced highway fatalities.

It is with this value proposition in mind that AWO strongly endorses the East Marginal Way Improvement Project and urges your support for the City of Seattle's INFRA grant application.

Sincerely,



Charles P. Costanzo
General Counsel & Vice President – Pacific Region

CC:

Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Governor Jay Inslee
Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal
Congressman Adam Smith
Mayor Jenny A. Durkan