



ST. MARY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

April 8, 2016

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

**RE: Letter of Support – Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District's
2016 FASTLANE Grant Application**

Dear Secretary Foxx:

As the President of the St. Mary Parish Chamber of Commerce, it has been brought to my attention that the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District (MCHTD) is submitting a proposal to the U.S. Department of Transportation for the FY 2016 *Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies* (FASTLANE) Grant Program. The estimated project costs total \$15 million; therefore, the port is requesting \$9 million in FASTLANE funding and will provide a non-federal match of \$6 million.

From my discussions with Port officials, they have been importing cargo from Mexico and exporting rice to Haiti, but they are unfortunately limited in the amount of business they can conduct at the port due to a lack of dock space. Consequently, it is my understanding that these FASTLANE funds will be used to design, engineer and construct over 64,000 ft² of additional dock space and cargo laydown area at their facility. I believe that this project is vital because their funding proposal enhances their ability to attract trade and business; the planned infrastructure project improves the Port's economic competitiveness; the request aligns with several local, state and federal studies and comprehensive plans; the enhancement will prepare the port for an expected increase in trade due to the Panama Canal expansion project; and since the port is considered a coastal port, the improvements will provide a "safe harbor" for vessels during tropical systems.

Additionally, it is important to know that the port is centrally located in Louisiana and the northern Gulf Coast, provides three entrances to the Mississippi River and documents over 5,000 marine transits each month. The port is definitely in an enviable position to increase foreign trade, and this justifies the need to ensure that this facility is prepared to keep the country's energy supply flowing. These infrastructure improvements, as contained in the port's FY 2016 FASTLANE application, will be a catalyst for new domestic jobs.

In closing, I commend the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District for its efforts to improve transportation, safety and economic development in the region and nation; and, I respectfully ask that you give your full consideration to their proposal. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna F. Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a horizontal line.

Donna F. Meyer
President