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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx, Secretary
U. S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Foxx,

It has been brought to my attention that the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District (Port of Morgan City) 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 port is located in the coastal region of Louisiana and includes the municipalities of Morgan City and Berwick. 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.

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. From my discussions with Port officials, they have recently been able import cargo from Mexico and export other cargo (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. 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.

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 in an envious 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, especially during emergencies. This area continues to move forward following the devastation from hurricanes, the remaining ill-effects from the 2010 BP oil spill and the 2011 high water/flooding event. I am told these infrastructure improvements will be a catalyst for new domestic jobs.

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 ask that you give your full consideration to the above referenced proposal. A report of the final decision would be helpful and appreciated. Please contact me through Ms. Brenda Moore in my Metairie Office with any questions. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



David Vitter
United States Senate

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