



The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Woodland Public Schools Board of Directors in support of the Austin Point Rail and Overpass project NEPA Project submitted by the Port of Woodland to the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program.

The Port of Woodland has hundreds of acres of waterfront property along the Columbia River zoned for heavy industrial use for future industrial marine cargo and export facilities. The Austin Point project will provide new rail freight access from the BNSF mainline to the Port's planned facilities. The project plans include new rail sidings along the BNSF rail line to eliminate congestion from trains switching on the busy mainline tracks. This project will also reduce conflicts with Amtrak trains, on this Federally designated high-speed rail corridor.

The City of Woodland is experiencing significant growth. To improve safety and mobility in the area, a new grade-separated crossing at Whalen Road will eliminate one at-grade crossing and provide safe and reliable access between the Port, Interstate 5, and emergency services. This is necessary as the Woodland School District may need to develop an elementary school in the Woodland Bottoms to serve the eventual development of over 600 homes on the adjacent side of Austin Point. These improvements will create safer routes for school transportation.

The Port is currently completing its 10% design phase for the project and anticipates completing 30% design in the next six months. CRISI grant funding would enable the Port to immediately begin work on the NEPA phase of the project.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the Port of Woodland's grant application.

MICHAEL GREEN, SUPERINTENDENT • woodlandschools.org

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Sincerely,

Janice Watts

President of Woodland Public Schools Board of Directors

Michael Green

Superintendent of Schools, Woodland Public Schools