



November 17, 2008

Ms. Valerie Jarrett
Mr. John Podesta
Mr. Peter Rouse
Co-Chairs, Transition Team
Office of the President-Elect
450 5th St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Jarrett and Messrs. Podesta and Rouse:

On behalf of the U.S. public port industry, please accept our congratulations on the election of Barack Obama as President. We offer the support and assistance of America's seaports as you work to lay out the agenda and set priorities for the Obama Administration.

Modern, safe and environmentally sustainable navigable seaports are absolutely vital to international trade and our nation's economic prosperity. Seaports directly and indirectly support over 13 million American workers and we are confident that the Obama Administration will give the marine transportation system (MTS) and our U.S. seaports the high priority that they deserve.

While we realize that transition efforts are often compartmentalized and organized by federal Department, we urge you to take a broader view as you seek solutions to our current economic crisis. The need to invest in our national infrastructure (including landside and waterside access to ports) and to promote international trade in order to stimulate the economy are issues that cross Departmental lines—requiring the support and attention of the Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Army (the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Management and Budget just to name a few.

For too long, the federal government has evidenced a disconnect between trade promotion and transportation policies and has neglected infrastructure investment. There are multiple federal agencies involved and no one has been looking at the big picture on national needs. Given the current state of our economy, the need to break that mold has never been greater and keeping our nation on track in the future will require a new focus and a change in our national priorities. We urge you to consider these thoughts as the various members of the transition team meet and coordinate their efforts.

In regard to economic stimulus measures, seaports can be part of the solution to the economic crisis and we urge significant investments in the landside and waterside connections to America's ports be included in any stimulus legislation. In addition to creating jobs and economic vitality immediately, these investments will also pay sizable dividends in the mid- and longer-term by generating family wage jobs and making the movement of goods more efficient, helping US exports be more competitive internationally (importantly, exports accounted for over a third of our nation's GDP last year), and with less congestion and air pollution.



I have enclosed a copy of a short document that highlights the value of seaports. We would appreciate the opportunity to provide you and members of the transition team with more information, in the form of written materials as well as a briefing if possible, on a number of critical issues to ports, ranging from providing timely and adequate funding for federal navigation channels to promoting landside access projects to facilitate the movement of freight.

America's public ports look forward to your leadership and support for our industry.

Sincerely,

Kurt J. Nagle

KJN/jcg
enclosure