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September 9, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

The Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance (SSGA) would like to offer our strong support for the Northwest Seaport Alliance' (NWSA) and SSA Terminal's, LLC's (SSAT) joint application for infrastructure funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration's (MARAD) Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP).

The Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance is a national trade association made up of export traders, agribusiness processors, freight forwarders, regional transport companies, and producers who ship their food and feed grain products worldwide. Our members ship by intermodal container to supply high quality food grade products to their customers. The NWSA Seattle and Tacoma ports handle a strong share of our exports that go to Asian markets from our base of member exporters located in the Midwest -- in large part because those ports have the best rail and ocean carrier service for our key Upper Midwest region.

The funding sought by NWSA/SSAT would be used for much needed modernization Terminal 5, a long-time key export terminal in the Seattle Harbor that has fallen nearly dormant because it is unable to adequately serve the new larger ships deployed by the main steamship lines. As planned, the modernized T-5 terminal will offer needed new advantages for our agricultural exporters, thanks to its on-dock rail service and key location for servicing larger container ships.

Port terminal modernization efforts, we know, necessarily require investment in landside infrastructure improvements – rail, road access, technology, 24-hr service capability, and more – to provide for speed, volume capacity and minimizing congestion. The planned improvements at T-5 are geared to do that.

SSGA member companies are working harder than ever to diversify our export customer base and to strengthen new and existing markets for the long term -- including those in South East Asia, North Asia and the Asian Sub Continent. For us to remain competitive or gain a competitive advantage, it will be crucial that our key export gateway ports like NWSA operate fast, efficiently and are able to handle renewed growth in container volume to those destinations. Costs are going up in shipping. The way to



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counteract our loss of competitiveness in shipping costs is to continue to invest in being the most efficient exporting nation we can be.

If our nation fails to undertake the investments necessary to maintain and grow our gateways and trade corridors from the Midwest to global markets, it will affect our ability to renew America's agricultural export economy, which in turn supports thousands of jobs in the Midwest and at the ports.

In closing, the Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance supports the NWSA and SSAT's application for infrastructure funding through the PIDP program. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Wenberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eric Wenberg, Executive Director
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