

Northeast Longshoreman's Association , Local # 1
P.O. Box 60
Eastport, Maine 04631

Maine Department of Transportation
Attn: Commissioner David Cole
16 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0016

August 17, 2009

Reference: Eastport Gateway Project

Dear Commissioner Cole,

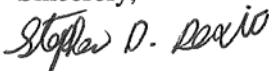
The Northeast Longshoreman's Association would like to take this opportunity to show its strong support for the referenced Eastport Gateway Project. This project is in essence to return rail access to the Port of Eastport and all of Washington County.

As you are aware, the Northeast Longshoreman's Association is the labor union that currently services the Port of Eastport having done so since 1981. The NELA since, has proudly been part of the growth of the Port of Eastport and all that it has meant to the entire region.

Our membership and their families depend on the work at the Port of Eastport to provide for not only their livelihood, but also for such costly benefits as health insurance. Although we at the NELA are proud to have been an integral part of the successful relationship between the Port of Eastport and its primary customer, formerly Georgia Pacific and now Domtar of Baileyville for the past three decades, the recent mill idling announced back in May of this year only emphasized what we at the NELA has always believed, the Port must diversify in order to stay in business.

We agree with local, state, and federal officials that the major key to that diversification is adequate rail investment. Over the years we have witnessed firsthand the missed opportunities of the Port of Eastport to attract new cargoes due to the lack of rail connectivity. We see this Gateway Project to be absolutely paramount to insure the success of the Port going forward and also insuring the job opportunities for our members to provide for their families.

Sincerely,



Stephen D. DeWitt
President, N.E.L.A., Local # 1