



EASTPORT

PORT AUTHORITY

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September 11, 2009

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

Reference: Eastport Gateway Project

Dear Commissioner Cole,

On behalf of the Eastport Port Authority Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our unyielding and steadfast belief in the potential and opportunity that the Eastport Gateway project offers not just the Port of Eastport but also the entire region. The Port of Eastport in its 30 year existence has never been afforded a legitimate rail connection and our ongoing review has always lead to the same conclusion, long term viability ultimately will demand that connection.

Since it's inception in 1977, the men and women of the Port of Eastport have continuously delivered on every investment the Port has ever garnered. When initial reports such as the Booze Allan Study stated that the Port of Eastport's capacity would limit at 50,000 tons a year, the people of this region did not yield, they instead stood by their inherent faith in the potential of this great Port. As a testament to that, in 2008 as you are well aware we set another record year with almost 400,000 tones of cargo moved.

Through the years the Port has maximized all capital investments, both large and small, to include the people of Maine's investment in the Estes Head Cargo Pier which opened in 1998. The Port of Eastport turned that investment into a decade of record growth.

This currently proposed investment was not approached in any other manner than all of the rest. It was with great thought, true belief and firm commitment. Perhaps illustrating this best was the bold decision of the Eastport Port Authority Board of Directors to fund the Eastport Freight Rail Restoration Study that is an originating foundation to this proposal. The cost of this study was significant to a Port Authority who at the time of funding had lost its largest customer and was facing an uncertain future. However, the Board believed then as it believes now, the potential for the Port of Eastport is directly linked to its ability to secure a rail connection.

We are proud to be a focus of the Gateway Project and thank you and your department for your shared commitment to the proposal. We are also very thankful of the commitment shown by Governor Baldacci, Senator Snowe, Senator Collins, Congressman Michaud, Senator Raye and the entire Washington County Delegation. This coupled with the strong industry and community support illustrates what this means to this entire region of Maine.

Sincerely,

Executive Director
Christopher M. Gardner