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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

COMMITTEES:  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,  
RANKING MEMBER  
APPROPRIATIONS  
ARMED SERVICES  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
ON AGING

September 2, 2009

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

**RE: Eastport Gateway Project**

Dear Commissioner Cole:

I am writing in support of the Eastport Port Authority's application for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) Tiger Grant Program.

As the deepest natural seaport in the continental United States, with the capacity to serve a variety of shippers, the Port of Eastport has tremendous potential as a powerful catalyst for the depressed Washington County economy. The availability of reliable, affordable freight transportation, easily accessible from the Port, would go a long way in maximizing this potential and increasing business at the Port of Eastport. The proposed Eastport Freight Rail Restoration Project would provide the necessary link to ensure efficient, cost effective shipment of goods from around the world, strengthening Eastport's ability to compete in the shipping industry and providing badly needed jobs throughout Washington County.

If awarded, Tiger Grant funding would be used to return rail to the Town of Perry via the existing St. Croix line and build a state of the art intermodal facility in Perry, providing rail access to the Port of Eastport for the first time since its inception, more than 30 years ago. This project would create construction jobs for Maine's skilled laborers, many of whom have been laid off due to the recent economic downturn, as well as permanent jobs for those who will operate the facility, and the people who transport the goods processed there.

I am confident that the Eastport Freight Rail Restoration Project would create lasting improvement in the economy of Washington County, and would increase business traffic throughout the State. With this in mind, I am pleased to offer my support for this funding request. I hope you give this application appropriate consideration in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

SMC:djg