

WASHINGTON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

August 17, 2009

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

Subject: Eastport Gateway Project-American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)
Tiger Grant Program

Dear Commissioner Cole:

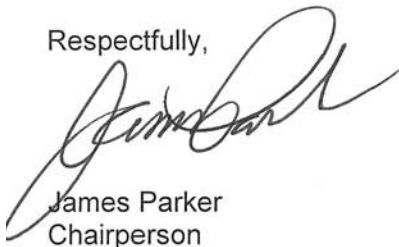
The Washington County Development Authority (WCDA) is writing in support of the Eastport Gateway Project which focuses on returning rail to the Town of Perry via the existing St. Croix line and the construction of a state of the industry inter-modal facility in Perry. This will allow the Port of Eastport, the deepest natural seaport in the entire continental United States, to have rail access for the first time ever in its 30 plus year existence.

WCDA is a quasi-governmental agency. Enabling legislation gives it the authority to "purchase, develop or redevelop, sell and lease commercial, residential and public property for the purpose of developing the economy of Washington County." This authorization also allows WCDA to provide "financial and technical assistance" to any Washington County governmental or nonprofit entity which supports economic and community development projects.

While WCDA has not provided financial or technical assistance to the Eastport Gateway Project, we are firmly committed to bringing rail back to the county, diversifying the Port of Eastport, and creating more efficient regional transportation corridors that benefit the entire state. Additionally, the Eastport Gateway Project will pump between \$38-\$53 million into the regional economy at a time when unemployment levels are at historic highs.

In closing, the Eastport Gateway Project will reposition Maine, Washington County and the Port of Eastport in the global economy. A project of this magnitude can be transformational. We believe the Port of Eastport and its personnel have what it takes to make that happen, and that the economy will reap benefits for decades to come.

Respectfully,



James Parker
Chairperson

C/O Sunrise County Economic Council
PO Box 679, Machias, ME 04654
Phone 207-255-0983 Fax 207-255-4987