

Maine Legislature

Washington County Delegation

Sen. Kevin L. Raye
Rep. Howard E. McFadden
Rep. Anne C. Perry



Rep. David C. Burns
Rep. Everett W. McLeod, Sr.
Rep. Dianne Tilton

September 18, 2009

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

Dear Commissioner Cole:

As the state legislative delegation representing Washington County, we are pleased to offer our enthusiastic bipartisan support for the Eastport Gateway Project proposed by the State of Maine and the Eastport Port Authority for funding through the TIGER grant program of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

This locally initiated and industry-supported project would return freight rail transport to the Town of Perry via existing rail corridors and provide vitally important access to the Port of Eastport. As the deepest natural seaport in the contiguous United States, the Port of Eastport has successfully grown in its cargo capacity and ability to offer services to the boating and cruise ship industry. The rail access that would be made possible through this proposal would further grow this vital part of New England's infrastructure and provide expanded opportunities for the local economy and the region at-large.

Washington County has long been the most economically disadvantaged county in Maine, a status that we have been working diligently to reverse by developing strategies to maximize the economic potential of our existing assets. Chief among these strategies, the Eastport Gateway Project would help transform Washington County's economy and aligns perfectly with the objectives of the TIGER grant program.

In combination with a \$4.5 million commitment from the Governor, as part of the state transportation bond issue, to fund a new bulk cargo handling system, these federal funds will contribute significantly to the transportation infrastructure of the East Coast, and put the Port of Eastport in a strong position to help bring long-term economic sustainability to Washington County and the region.

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We support the TIGER grant application wholeheartedly and hope that federal officials will approve the application and award the funds necessary to advance this exciting and valuable proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything else we can do to help ensure the success of the application.

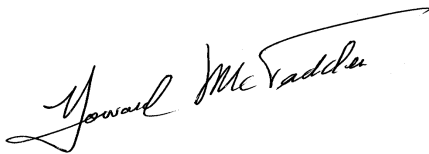
Sincerely,



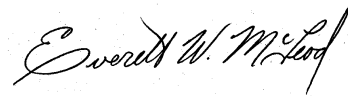
KEVIN L. RAYE
Senate Republican Leader



DAVID C. BURNS
State Representative



HOWARD E. McFADDEN
State Representative



EVERETT W. McLEOD, Sr.
State Representative



ANNE C. PERRY
State Representative



DIANNE TILTON
State Representative