



May 16, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20590

RE: Port of Houston Authority's Multimodal Project Discretionary (MPDG) Grant Program Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write to express our support for the Port of Houston Authority's (the Port Authority) application for the U.S. Department of Transportation's MPDG program for the Generating Unparalleled Leadership in Freight and Sustainable Transportation for American Resiliency (GULFSTAR) Freight Network. We are the Healthy Port Communities Coalition (HPCC), a coalition of nonprofit and community-based organizations working together for improved quality of life for residents living near the Ship Channel. We recognize the importance of economic development for the prosperity of our region, and we advocate environmental and economic justice for communities located near the Port and freight ways.

This grant, if awarded, will provide planning, building and demonstrating of new facilities and technologies, delivering environmental benefits and business equity improvements, and de-risk additional investments resulting in faster transformation than without federal support.

As you and your staff review the proposal, we hope you will give consideration to the many strengths of this application. What excites us by this proposal are the opportunities for emissions reductions, particularly those that allow for the development and deployment of battery electric zero-emissions vehicles. We also support opportunities for reducing idling. We hope that this proposal can bring some relief to the communities near port operations and freight movement corridors that suffer from the harmful health effects of diesel pollution. The HPCC is also excited about the opportunities this grant could provide to economically support communities most burdened by pollution.

If awarded, the Port Authority should prioritize economic benefits for small, minority-owned businesses, particularly businesses located in and that hire within proximal environmental justice communities. The Port Authority should also create a health impact assessment and mitigation strategy for any projects that



will extend the Port Authority's footprint. The Port Authority should also continue to reduce emissions from its current operations, and we encourage the Port to seek out additional funding to do so from programs like the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) and the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP). The Port Authority should also develop a process for robust community engagement throughout the lifecycle of this grant.

Given the merits of the proposal, our coalition offers our support of the GULFSTAR Freight network.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Healthy Port Communities Coalition

Bridgette Murray, Achieving Community  
Tasks Successfully

Rev. James Caldwell, Coalition of  
Community Organizations

Leticia Ablaza, Air Alliance Houston

Adrian Shelley, Public Citizen

Terence Narcisse, East Harris County  
Empowerment Council

Jackie Medcalf, Texas Health and  
Environment Alliance