

MARIA CANTWELL  
WASHINGTON



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

May 29, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590-7202

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to express my support for the application submitted to the 2020 Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) by the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), an operating partnership between the ports of Seattle and Tacoma. NWSA is seeking grant funding for the final phase of the Terminal 5 Uplands Modernization and Rehabilitation Project.

NWSA's Terminal 5 is one of the largest marine terminals on the West Coast and provides connections via Union Pacific and BNSF as far inland as the Ohio River Valley. Yet Terminal 5 has been mostly dormant since 2014, when ocean carriers abandoned the terminal due to its inability to serve larger container vessels that are now standard in the global shipping industry.

In collaboration with marine terminal operator SSA Terminals, NWSA has begun to modernize critical transportation infrastructure at the two seaports that will enable international container operations to resume and improve the efficiency, safety, and resiliency of terminal operations. According to NWSA, the project will double the terminal's capacity for refrigerated agricultural exports to more than 170,000 containers per year, and repairs to on-dock class 1 rail tracks will restore full capacity to the terminal's intermodal yard. Terminal 5 will also be able to simultaneously serve 18,000-TEU ships, some of the world's largest container vessels. These new capabilities will enable the NWSA to reduce shipping costs and speed time to market for U.S. agricultural producers and manufacturers.

NWSA projects these improvements will add 6,600 new direct jobs to the over 20,000 jobs already directly supported by cargo activity at the two seaports. Exporters from Washington state and surrounding states including Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Iowa depend on the Northwest Seaport Alliance as their fastest and most cost-effective option for shipping price-sensitive agricultural products. Expanding capacity at NWSA will increase access to international markets for U.S. farmers, manufacturers, and consumers.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration to the Northwest Seaport Alliance's application to the 2020 Port Infrastructure Development Program.

Sincerely,

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator