MARK BEGICH
ALASKA

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

SUITE SH-825
HART BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-3004

September 15, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Cochran,

We are writing to request you work with us to provide between $10 and $20 million for the Port of Anchorage (POA) as the FY2010 Defense Appropriations Bill moves from the full committee to the floor and then to conference.

Since 2003, with your help, the project has received funding in the DOD appropriations bill at approximately $10 million-11 million per year. This funding is a very critical part of the overall funding plan. To lose the DOD money altogether would delay the project.

The POA is one of 16 nationally designated commercial Strategic Ports with direct calls scheduled by the DOD for critical deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan in-and-out of Alaska's military bases and training facilities. These include Fort Greely, Eielson Air Force Base, Fort Wainwright, Fort Richardson, and Elmendorf Air Force Base.

The POA is a regional port that can more accurately be described as the "Port of Alaska," as it serves 85% of the population within the State, providing 90% of our consumer goods. The POA was inaugurated in the late 1950's with little build-up in the past 50 years, and is currently under-serving the Alaska's transportation system as its primary hub.

The intermodal expansion began as a federal, state, and municipal dock replacement expansion program in 2003, with the USDOT Maritime Administration as the lead federal agency, to rehabilitate the port facility to accommodate larger ships and increased port calls by providing additional upland area and berthing capacity. It has road, rail, and maritime access, close proximity to the world's third largest cargo airport, and a large city with a diverse skilled labor force. As the state of Alaska moves closer to building a natural gas pipeline, the POA will be an integral component in the supply chain process supporting this effort. The POA is also a key driver in the Pacific Northwest economy, receiving ships from the Port of Tacoma and representing a significant portion of Tacoma's business.

We know this request is late in the process, but it is also the biggest transportation project currently underway in Alaska. We look forward to working on this project with you in the FY 2011 Appropriations cycle and in the future.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

U.S Senator Mark Begich