Central Oceans

Friday, May 15th, 2020
The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

We are writing to you today to express our support for the Western Reserve Port Authority's application for funding in the FY20 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants Program. Funding will be used for the Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub, a strategic infrastructure initiative to capitalize on Lordstown's location at the intersection of multiple modes of transportation, broadband, and electrification to position the area as the premier regional warehousing and distribution hub.

Central Oceans has been supporting the region's supply chain since 2014, having invested time, resources to develop infrastructure in the local area. Central Oceans' logistics support of the region's infrastructure injected millions of dollars into the regional economy, laying the foundation for job growth and lower-cost energy, positioning the area for future growth and development. This grant, coupled with our future anticipated involvement, will help attract further investment from outside companies. As a critical logistics provider in the region, we look forward to working with the Port Authority to improve and integrate rail efficiencies into the region's logistics network.

As a leading transportation and logistics provider, Central Oceans believes the Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub could be a vital hub in the US's intermodal network. Central Oceans in partnership with the Ohio Commerce Center will inject growth into the area by developing businesses interest in establishing largescale distribution operations in Lordstown as well supporting that distribution through operating a state-of-the-art intermodal facility and foreign trade zone supporting inbound, outbound shipments to/from the Ohio Valley.

The location of Lordstown's proposed Smart Logistics Hub would fill the geographic gap in the country's current intermodal network and provide much-needed capacity/infrastructure in Ohio. The existing transportation infrastructure is underdeveloped and overextended. Central Oceans believes their extensive global logistics and rail experience combined with the prime location of the proposed Lordstown Smart Logistics hub would make this area of the country very attractive for any major corporation looking to develop their midwestern supply chain further.

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This development would stimulate significant business investment, job growth, and improve quality of life for this region, which was significantly impacted by numerous economic downturns and migration of industry. The demand is there currently to support the need for this state-of-the-art logistics hub. The grant would FastTrack the needed infrastructure for positioning the Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub as critical to the nation's transportation network and crucial to this country's economy.

The Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub would build off past governmental and private investments plus the existing transportation infrastructure, and the ongoing private investment by companies such as General Motors (GM) & LG Chem, Lordstown Motors Corporation, and TJX Homegoods to name a few.

We urge you to give the Western Reserve Port Authority's grant application your fullest consideration and support as it presents a catalytic opportunity to bring federal dollars to the Mahoning Valley to aid in the region's ongoing economic recovery.

Respectfully,

Theo Vallas
Vice President Rail Logistics
Central Oceans USA LLC