

2162 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

PHONE: 202-225-6116
FAX: 202-225-5590

WWW.PINGREE.HOUSE.GOV



CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT MAINE

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CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Ms. Nuria Fernandez
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

October 1st, 2021

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

I am pleased to write in support of the application submitted by the Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD) for funding through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) competitive Passenger Ferry Grant Program. CBITD would use this funding to replace the Maquoit II, an aging ferry in their fleet with a new vessel equipped with a diesel electric hybrid propulsion system.

The CBITD is a quasi-municipal entity created by a Special Act of the Maine Legislature in 1981 to provide year-round ferry service (which includes passengers, vehicles, freight, and US Mail) to and from six islands in Casco Bay. CBITD is the "lifeline" for year-round and seasonal residents on these islands that do not have road connections to the mainland – as critical to the islanders' transportation needs as bridges and roads on the mainland are to other communities.

The CBITD is at a point where it must make improvements to its fleet. The fleet of five ferries has an average age of 24.2 years. The Maquoit II was built in 1994 and is, without question, the workhorse of the fleet. It carries passengers and freight nearly 50 miles each day, 365 days a year, and delivers mail to the rural islands CBITD serves. This project is critically important to the continued safe and reliable operation of CBITD. It is in alignment with FTA's emphasis on state of good repair and will enable the CBITD to be in compliance with its FTA required Transit Asset Management Plan goals.

Both CBITD, and the island communities they serve, understand the importance of environmental stewardship. The environment is directly linked to their economy, health and general way of life. As CBITD prepares to construct a new vessel to replace the Maquoit II, they are seeking to reduce their climate impact through the use of innovative battery-powered propulsion technology. Not only does CBITD estimate this technology would allow them to eliminate an estimated 1,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions annually, the propulsion system will dramatically improve the rider and neighbor experience by eliminating exhaust fumes, excessive engine noise and vibrations found on the current vessel.

2 PORTLAND FISH PIER, SUITE 304
PORTLAND, ME 04101
PHONE: 207-774-5019
FAX: 207-871-0720



108 MAIN STREET
WATERVILLE, ME 04901
PHONE: 207-873-5713
FAX: 207-873-5717

This project is in alignment with the FTA's emphasis on improving the condition and quality of existing passenger ferry services and on modernizing ferry boats.

Thank you for your fullest consideration of this application. Please contact Corrinne Latti in my office at (202) 225-6116 should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress