

FREIGHT STAKEHOLDERS COALITION

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News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Senator Cantwell Urges USDOT to Establish Freight-Focused Multimodal Coordinating Office

Freight Stakeholders Coalition Applauds Senator Cantwell's Leadership, Encourages USDOT to Act Swiftly

WASHINGTON, DC (May 31, 2012) – Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) wrote U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Ray LaHood today requesting the Secretary use his administrative powers to establish a high-level, multimodal coordinating office tasked with improving freight mobility through improved policy, planning, and investment.

"Improving freight mobility is key to staying competitive globally and growing the economy," said U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA). "I'm pleased to see the public and private sector coming together in support of a high-level and coordinated multimodal freight initiative at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Prioritizing freight investments within USDOT would help enable continued growth of our robust export economy."

The Freight Stakeholders Coalition (Coalition), which represents shippers and transportation providers joined by the common goal of improving freight mobility, applauds Senator Cantwell for her dedication to improving goods movement efficiency on our multimodal freight network. The establishment of a high-level freight office at USDOT has been a long-standing priority of the Coalition's and was a key principle in the group's surface transportation reauthorization platform.

An efficient freight network is critical to supporting our nation's growing economy, and as such, requires a high-level office at USDOT dedicated to coordinating among the various modes on our interconnected network to improve the current system and plan for the future. Further, as Senator Cantwell points out in her letter, the creation of such an office would go far in reducing current redundancies and has even been recommended by two Government Accountability Office reports as a useful measure in reducing government duplication and increasing cost savings.

The following are statements of support from the Coalition's membership organizations:

"The creation of a freight office represents an opportunity for a great deal of consolidation and process streamlining among the various agencies that work together to move freight." **Kurt J. Nagle, President and CEO, American Association of Port Authorities**

"The demands on our nation's multimodal goods movement system grow in lockstep with our recovering economy. Creating a high-level freight office at USDOT that is responsible for coordinated planning and investment will be critical to ensuring our freight network can accommodate increased freight volumes." **Leslie Blakey, President & Executive Director, Coalition for America's Gateways & Trade Corridors**

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"Retailers are among the nation's largest shippers, moving hundreds of billions of dollars worth of merchandise through the nation's ports, railroads and highways each year. In this interconnected and highly competitive global marketplace, the United States needs to develop a national freight policy that coordinates stakeholders, prioritizes projects, and focuses much-needed national attention on supply chain efficiency." **Matthew Shay, President & CEO, National Retail Federation**

"Every day, intermodal freight transportation providers move America's exports and imports by rail, highway, and water. These important stakeholders have been without a visible advocate in the Office of the Secretary since the Office of Intermodalism was shifted to the Research and Innovative Technology Administration in 2005. We applaud Senator Cantwell for calling on Secretary LaHood to recreate an elevated multimodal office that will address and improve freight mobility in the U.S." **Joanne F. Casey, President & CEO, Intermodal Association of North America**

"Creation of a freight office at the USDOT would represent a significant step in moving national transportation policy toward a greater focus on improving the efficiency of freight transportation networks. Given that more than 80% of the nation's economy moves on our freight networks, expediting freight projects and concentrating more resources on addressing freight needs are critical to our nation's future economic growth." **Bill Graves, President & CEO, American Trucking Associations**

"We applaud Senator Cantwell's call for a freight office at the Department of Transportation. Every year retailers work tirelessly to transport hundreds of thousands of products around the world using highly complex supply chains. As such they are reliant on a multi-modal transportation network that is efficient and effective. Without advances in the management of freight programs, proper investment, coordination, and planning, retailers will face significant challenges and infrastructure deficiencies that will significantly hinder their ability to move goods around the world and better serve their customers." **Kelly Kolb, Vice President of Government Affairs, Retail Industry Leaders Association**

"That the Office of the Secretary doesn't already have a freight office doesn't make sense. Therefore the idea of establishing one is a no-brainer. Today so much of freight logistics cuts across the modes. It isn't enough to view goods movement as a "highway thing" or rail or maritime thing. It is all those things. Just the sight of an ocean container moving across the docks to a chassis of a waiting truck --or a trucker delivering a box to an intermodal rail yard for the long haul--should be enough to convince our policy makers that the USDOT organization needs to catch up to how freight is moving today." **Charles T. "Chuck" Carroll, Executive Director, National Association of Waterfront Employers**

"We applaud Senator Cantwell on her leadership in working to create a comprehensive national freight policy aimed at improving our nation's infrastructure and transportation system. A new high-level freight office within the U.S. Department of Transportation will benefit the nearly four million U.S. workers in the U.S. apparel and footwear industry, an industry that relies on its ability to transport goods efficiently to remain competitive in the global marketplace." **Kevin Burke, President & CEO, American Apparel & Footwear Association**