

August 30, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The undersigned organizations urge swift establishment of the Office of Multimodal Freight Infrastructure and Policy (Freight Office) as required under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58).

Supply chain issues continue to be a major concern for the business community. While we no longer face historic backlogs at our nation's most significant gateways, new geopolitical challenges, shifting trade routes, and underlying trends of re-shoring and nearshoring are creating new challenges and opportunities. Further, the federal government is increasingly active in working with States and other freight stakeholders to drive supply chain considerations through its implementation of IIJA and other legislation such as the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167). Simply put, supply chains will continue to drive the interest of business leaders, freight stakeholders, and policymakers at the State and Federal level.

Given this sustained interest in supply chains, the Freight Office will serve as an important tool to help coordinate activities across the federal government and provide senior-level leadership to guide federal decision making in supply chain competitiveness, security, and fluidity. The Freight Office is also designed to coordinate with the business community and States and other freight stakeholders to address freight challenges, including helping States direct funding to support their economic competitiveness and anticipate challenges to America's freight networks. With all the activity and attention around supply chains and logistics, this coordinating role is more important than ever. Indeed, the Freight Office is the natural successor to the important coordinating role that the White House's Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force played during the 2021 global supply chain crisis.

Despite the importance of this office, leadership has not been announced, a formal organizational structure has not been implemented, and a policymaking apparatus has not been developed. We find this concerning as this office promises to play a crucial role in the development of long-term multimodal freight planning, as well as serve as a critical coordination point between the Departments of State, Commerce, Energy, and Homeland Security and other agencies with jurisdiction over supply chain policy. Without the necessary leadership in place, much of this

interagency coordination is occurring on an ad-hoc basis, impacting the efficiency and decision-making in how these tasks are carried out.

For these reasons and more, we urge you to act and designate an acting leader of the Office of Multimodal Freight Infrastructure and Policy, as well as move forward with officially establishing the office within the Department.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Agriculture Transportation Coalition
Airforwarders Association
American Association of Port Authorities
American Apparel & Footwear Association
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association
American Trucking Associations
Association of American Railroads
Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors
Consumer Brands Association
Intermodal Association of North America
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Waterfront Employers
National Retail Federation
Travel Goods Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

CC: The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
The Honorable Ted Cruz, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
The Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure