Torres Rojas, Genara

FOI#13340

From: wschulte@easternenvironmental.org
Sent: Tuesday, July 17, 2012 11:54 AM
To: Duffy, Daniel
Cc: Torres Rojas, Genara; Van Duyne, Sheree
Subject: Freedom of Information Online Request Form

Information:

First Name: William
Last Name: Schulte
Company: Eastern Environmental Law Center
Mailing Address 1: 744 Broad Street
Mailing Address 2: Suite 1525
City: Newark
State: NJ
Zip Code: 07102
Email Address: wschulte@easternenvironmental.org
Phone: 9734241485
Required copies of the records: Yes

List of specific record(s):
All letters sent by the Executive Director of the Port Authority of NYNJ to the US Dept. of Transportation, FHWA, regarding the Bayonne Bridge Raise the Roadway Project.

THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NY & NJ

Daniel D. Duffy
FOI Administrator

July 31, 2012

Mr. William Schulte
Eastern Environmental Law Center
744 Broad Street, Suite 1525
Newark, NJ 07102

Re: Freedom of Information Reference No. 13340

Dear Mr. Schulte:

This is a response to your July 17, 2012 request, which has been processed under the Port Authority's Freedom of Information Code (the "Code") for copies of the letters sent by the Port Authority Executive Director to the US Dept. of Transportation, FHWA regarding the Bayonne Bridge Raise the Roadway Project.

Material responsive to your request and available under the Code, which was previously provided to you in response to Freedom of Information Request Reference No. 13074, can be found on the Port Authority's website at http://www.panynj.gov/corporate-information/foi/13340-O.pdf. Paper copies of the available records are available upon request.

We have searched our files and have found no other documents responsive to your request.

Please refer to the above FOI reference number in any future correspondence relating to your request.

Very truly yours,

Daniel D. Duffy
FOI Administrator

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New York, , NY 10003
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THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NY & NJ

Patrick J. Foye
Executive Director

March 23, 2012

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.,
West Building, 9th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Napolitano and Secretary LaHood:

As Executive Director of The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, I applaud President Obama's issuance on March 22, 2012, of the Executive Order on Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects. The Port Authority strongly supports the President's call for action to build and re-build our nation's infrastructure as a way to create and preserve jobs. His announcement represents another important step in the Administration's actions to reform the permitting process for these important projects.

I am writing to you today to request your consideration of a project that the Port Authority has identified as one that should merit your respective department's designation as a project of national and regional significance to be tracked on the Federal Infrastructure Dashboard pursuant to criteria provided in the Executive Order. The project is the Bayonne Bridge Navigational Clearance Program. This project is an ideal one for the new Federal Infrastructure Dashboard since the project involves neither the building nor demolition of a bridge but rather the raising of the roadway on the existing structure.

The 5,780-foot Bayonne Bridge connects Staten Island with Bayonne, New Jersey and traverses the Kill Van Kull Channel that connects The Port of New York and New Jersey with major shipping routes on the Atlantic Ocean. The Port Authority is working to raise the roadway of the Bayonne Bridge from a clearance of 151 feet to 215 feet to provide necessary navigational clearance in anticipation of the Panama Canal expansion completion in 2014. This expansion will allow large post-Panamax ships to access the region, which currently is not possible. Our decision to raise the roadway is the best solution to address the navigational clearance problem, while minimizing environmental and neighborhood impacts, controlling costs, and expediting the project schedule, when compared to other alternatives.

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The Bayonne Bridge project is a high priority infrastructure project for the New York/New Jersey region. Raising the bridge roadway is crucial to maintaining the Port's position as the third largest port in the country. Moreover, the project has significant national impact on freight and goods movement since the Port of New York and New Jersey accounts for 40% of east coast container imports.

However, the project cannot move forward until such time as the Port Authority receives a permitting decision from the United States Coast Guard, who has initiated the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process which is scheduled for completion at the end of this year. Once that decision is received, the Port Authority can commence construction on this project that will create a significant number of jobs in the New York/New Jersey Metropolitan region.

It is expected that this project will generate more than 3,300 annual jobs during the five-year construction period. These jobs include direct, on-site construction jobs, as well as related employment opportunities that will directly support the program to Raise the Roadway, and allow ships to access the Port of New York and New Jersey. In addition, the Bayonne infrastructure renewal program will generate more than $360 million in total wages, and approximately $1.5 billion in regional sales, providing a much-needed economic boost to the New York and New Jersey metropolitan area economy.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the Port Authority has already committed $1 billion in funding and expediting federal, state and municipal regulatory reviews is critical to success of the project. The Port Authority is committed to delivering this project as expeditiously as possible and we ask you to designate the Bayonne Bridge project as one of national and regional significance pursuant to the Executive Order. The awarding of this designation would permit the Port Authority to advance on the start of construction and provide much-needed jobs to the region. Every day counts as the completion of Panama Canal expansion draws closer.

I want to thank you in advance for your consideration and attention. If you have any questions or require additional information, I will make myself available at your convenience to respond.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Foye
Executive Director