



April 10, 2019

The Honorable Mary Gay Scanlon  
1535 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative Scanlon:

This letter asks you to support an increase in PORTS funding to \$15 million in FY20. The additional \$10 million would allow NOAA to reduce the maintenance backlog on existing equipment, modernize equipment to a consistent current platform across the nation, transition new services from development to full implementation, and eliminate the need for local cost-sharing contracts.

At Delaware River ports, safety is always the primary consideration. And among the most powerful tools available is the NOAA Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS). Remarkably, despite flat funding of \$5 million over the past decade, the program has expanded in recent years to 33 locations that serve over 75 of the nation's most active ports.

PORTS is vital a source of real-time information at Delaware River ports and throughout the nation. Its value as a decision-support tool that improves safety, efficiency, and coastal resource management is unparalleled. Mariners rely on PORTS to plan for and during transits, allowing them to act based on actual vs. predicted tide and weather conditions, especially critical here given that the Delaware is a tidal river. Navigational and personal safety, incident preparedness, prevention, and response, and environmental protection all depend on PORTS. It is also worth noting that the system supports coastal resource protection, municipal and county waterway planning, and drinking water resource management. Further, PORTS helps protect five bridges, the Cape May Lewes Ferry, and other critical infrastructure against spills, collisions, and allisions.

Finally, the system is a key factor in our port's competitive standing, regional jobs, and revenues, as our ability to attract and retain customers depends heavily on maintaining an exemplary safety record.

Given these many diverse benefits, clearly the \$15 million in funding more than pays for itself in any given year.

Thank you for considering this request. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

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Sincerely,

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