

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 24, 2021

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

RE: FTA grant application; Friends of Frog Ferry

Dear Ms. Fernandez:

We are writing in support of the Friends of Frog Ferry's application for funding through the Federal Transit Agency's Passenger Ferry Grant Program for a passenger ferry pilot project. Such a service will help change the transit culture for commuters in the Portland region by moving single occupancy commuters out of their cars and onto the ferry, while also providing strong climate, equity, and quality of life benefits to the community.

After over four years of work, coalescing more than 1,700 stakeholders and convening more than 1,500 meetings, Frog Ferry has developed a proof of concept for a pilot project to begin operating a public ferry service on the Willamette River along the Portland waterfront between Cathedral Park/St. Johns and River Place. Eventually the full ferry service will travel between Vancouver and Oregon City and include up to nine stops along the way, connecting a wide variety of communities, businesses, recreational activities, and points of interest. This pilot project will make the initial step by connecting the low/medium income neighborhoods of Cathedral Park and St. John's to one of Oregon's largest employers, the Oregon Health and Science University, and the broader South Waterfront area. It will also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by taking cars off the road, improve the resilient infrastructure for the region, provide a low-cost and equitable transportation alternative, and connect residents to the river and greenspaces.

It is clear this transportation resource is needed at a time when our residents' quality of life is suffering from daily gridlock, especially because Portland ranks among the top ten worst cities for traffic congestion and is one of the last major river cities in the U.S. without a ferry service. More than 67% of Portland residents identified traffic gridlock and unreliable travel times as the most challenging issue facing the region's quality of life and business climate. Adding a new mode of transit to the region could help distribute the transportation burden and connect the workforce to major employment centers.

The Friends of Frog Ferry is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and is supported by key elected officials and agencies such as Mayor Ted Wheeler, the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Portland Bureau of Transportation, the Port of Portland, the Port of Vancouver, the Working Waterfront Coalition, several communities such as the Central Eastside Industrial Coalition, Cathedral Park and St. John's Neighborhood Associations as well as member-based organizations such as the Portland Business Alliance and Business for a Better Portland. The four research and feasibility studies conducted over the past three years detail the time and cost efficiency of a ferry service while also helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Frog Ferry pilot program is estimated to save 3,170 metric tons of CO² alone. To date, Frog Ferry has delivered more than \$7 million in pro bono professional services value, due to the extensive participation of private sector leaders.

The goals of the Friends of Frog Ferry's pilot project are consistent with those of the Passenger Ferry Grant Program and the project will provide direct benefits to Portland residents while improving the long-term sustainability of the metro area. For these reasons, we urge full and fair consideration of Friends of Frog Ferry's grant application.

Please keep our offices informed of the status of this application. If we can be of further assistance, do not hesitate to contact Naod Aynalem in Senator Wyden's office at 202-754-1631, Kari Herinckx in Senator Merkley's office at 503-758-2943, Kathie Eastman Tell in Congressman Blumenauer's office at 503-231-2300, or Al Bannan in Congresswoman Bonamici's office at 503-469-6010. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,



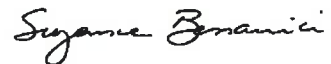
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress