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CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Office of the County Executive
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February 8, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

SUBJECT: Town of Port Deposit RAISE Grant

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Cecil County Government is pleased to support the Town of Port Deposit's application for a FY23 RAISE Grant to advance design of infrastructure resilience strategies such as upland stormwater management, roadway drainage improvements, retrofitting outfalls with backflow prevention, installation of closure gates along the Norfolk Southern railroad embankment, pumping operations, and other strategies recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers, Cecil County Department of Public Works, and the Town's consultants.

The Town of Port Deposit is a treasured community rich in historical and environmental resources along the lower Susquehanna River; however, increasingly frequent flash flooding, riverine flooding and storm surge are preventing many revitalization and community investment strategies due to flood risk. As evidenced by the analysis, the flooding problems can be mitigated if not solved altogether with risk-based public investments through programs such as RAISE. The Town has been very entrepreneurial in winning funds from USDA's Rural Development program, HUD's Community Development Block Grant program, and other partners, but much work remains to be done for the Town to achieve its full economic potential, especially in the recreational tourism sector.

The cultural and historical assets of the town are at risk due to outdated or insufficient stormwater and flood controls. Sitting at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay and its confluence with the Susquehanna River, the Town is both a "last line of defense" against sediment and pollutants entering the Bay from nearby farms, residential and commercial developments; and, on the "front line" of asset protection against tidal surge from coastal storms and releases from the Conowingo Dam. Upgrading stormwater controls is critical to the health of the Chesapeake Bay, maintaining safe drinking water for residents of the Town, and protecting the Town's historic and cultural resources.

Additionally, flooding caused by storm surge and upland storm drainage places both property and life at risk. Port Deposit's Main Street is the single point of egress for many Town residents and nearly all commercial development and community facilities. While major events such as Hurricane Agnes and Tropical Storm Lee have captured the "headlines" of evacuation and swift water rescue, the increasing severity of once routine thunderstorms is causing frequent flash flooding with increasingly dire outcomes.

The proposed RAISE grant is a critical component in the Town's resiliency efforts. Cecil County Government is committed to working with the Town of Port Deposit to continue progress on stormwater and flood controls so that the Town may grow and thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danielle Hornberger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Danielle Hornberger
County Executive