

Port of Tampa Maritime Industries Association

July 30, 2015

The Honorable Les Miller, Chairman
Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization
601 E. Kennedy Blvd.
18th Floor
Tampa, FL 33602

Dear Chairman Miller,

On behalf of the members of the Port of Tampa Maritime Industries Association (PTMIA), I urge you and other members of the Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to approve and support the Tampa Bay Express Project. The Tampa Bay Express Project will greatly enhance traffic flow on Interstate 275 and Interstate 4 and consequently improve traffic flow into and out of Port Tampa Bay and improve the traffic flow from Tampa International Airport and the Westshore business district to downtown and the port.

Implementation of toll express lanes is one of the key components of the FDOT transportation Master Plan and is a significant step in configuring the Interstate interchange in downtown Tampa to eventually provide for rapid transit. The proposal of \$3 billion in support from the FDOT provides Tampa with the opportunity to implement this portion of the Master Plan. We must compete with other regions of the state for the dollars necessary to fund this project, making unified local support for the Tampa Bay Express project critical for the funding package being developed by the FDOT.

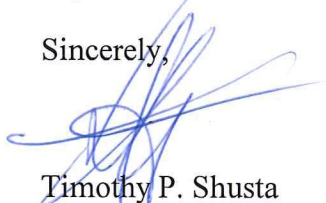
The PTMIA is an association of businesses that operate or use public and private port facilities at Port Tampa Bay and businesses that support the maritime industry in Tampa. Our mission is to increase the number of ships calling at Port Tampa Bay and to increase the volume of trade flowing through Tampa. Tampa must have a world class transportation system to continue to grow. Port Tampa Bay is the gateway for commerce flowing into and out of west central Florida and that gateway must have an efficient transportation system to function. The current regional highway system is nearing capacity and will limit the ability to grow international trade through Tampa and other growing communities in west central Florida if improvements to the transportation system do not continue.

In January 2014 the FDOT completed the Selmon Expressway/I-4 connector which improved the flow of traffic in and out of the port and moved large trucks off city streets and out of Ybor City. The Tampa Bay Express Project is the next step in the process of improving traffic flow through the city and in and out of the port. Investment in this project will yield immediate benefit for businesses and residents and will benefit future generations.

The Honorable Les Miller
Chairman, Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization
July 30, 2015

On behalf of the businesses that are working to increase the number of ships calling at Port Tampa Bay and to increase international trade through Tampa to west central Florida, I strongly urge the MPO Board to approve and support this project.

Sincerely,



Timothy P. Shusta
President, PTMIA