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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2021

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting funding for the Maritime High School in fiscal year 2022. The entity to receive funding for this project is Highline Public Schools, located in King County, Washington.

The funding would be used to support start-up costs for the Maritime High School (MHS) in its first academic school year, which will launch in the fall of 2021. Over the past two years, the Highline School District (HPS), the Port of Seattle, Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition (DRCC), and the Northwest Maritime Center (NWMC) have collaborated to design and launch a stand-alone Maritime High School in south Seattle, Washington. The vision for MHS is to provide a world-class education, within a historically impacted community, that advances the next generation of leaders, innovators, and marine professionals.

The maritime industry is at the core of Washington State's cultural heritage and economic sustainability. While the maritime industry is a pillar of the state's economy, workforce gaps threaten the sector and the current education and workforce system is woefully underprepared to support a diverse and inclusive workforce. The average age of the state's maritime workforce is 54, the majority of whom are white males, owing to structural inequities that have kept women and people of color on the sidelines from these opportunities. Absent a stronger career pipeline, many maritime positions will remain unfilled; and career-connected learning opportunities will continue to elude the diverse population young people who comprise King County's population.

This funding will help MHS provide inclusive programs, policies, and practices to ensure that maritime career opportunities are accessible to all students, focusing on the school's capacity to recruit, prepare, and empower students who are under-represented in maritime and ocean science careers, emphasizing students of color, students with limited access to resources, and girls.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam Smith".

Adam Smith
Member of Congress