



Skagit County Board of Commissioners

Ron Wesen, First District
Peter Browning, Second District
Lisa Janicki, Third District

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
3206 Jackson Federal Building
915 2nd Avenue
Seattle, WA 98174

Re: Port of Skagit Agricultural Innovation Center at Bayview Business Park

Senator Cantwell,

The Skagit Board of County Commissioners writes to support the Port of Skagit's request for \$2,000,000 in FY2025 Congressionally Directed Spending funds for the construction of an agricultural innovation building and greenhouse at Bayview Business Park.

The project will include construction of a 40,000 square foot building to house the WSU Breadlab, King Arthur Flour baking classroom, research and development space for sustainable food systems, farm technology development, value-added agricultural business development and expansion space, complementary office and conference space, as well as a teaching greenhouse space.

The Port has been a leader in value-added agriculture research and innovation for the past 15 years in Skagit County. The project will center this important work in the existing Bayview Business Park, already home to more than fourteen agriculture-related businesses, which connect and inspire the development of sustainable food systems that are (1) economically viable to the farmer, (2) safe, nutritious, and accessible to all communities, and (3) good for soil health and the environment.

The total project cost is \$8,000,000 and groundbreaking is estimated for summer 2025. The Port has \$1,000,000 committed to infrastructure and development of this project and is seeking \$2,000,000 in federal funding to construct a building to house Breadlab, additional research and development space, and associated greenhouse space.

We are in full support of the Port of Skagit's application for FY25 Congressional Directed Spending funds. We recognize the need for this new facility, as it will enable our robust agricultural business community the opportunity to expand and innovate, and we are appreciative of the Port's efforts to support our local farmers.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Peter Browning, Chair


Lisa Janicki, Commissioner


Ron Wesen, Commissioner