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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE

June 14, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to ask for full and fair consideration for the grant application submitted by Rhoads Industries to the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD). Rhoads Industries, located at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, is strategically positioned along the Delaware River, just downriver from the bustling Port of Philadelphia, and borders my congressional district of Chester and Berks Counties, PA-06.

It has come to my attention that Rhoads Industries is pursuing Small Shipyard Grant funds to enhance their training capabilities in both standard and mechanized welding, as well as in ship fitting. The proposed funding will facilitate the acquisition of vital equipment, including 10 standard welding systems, two mechanized welding systems, a plasma cutting system, two gantry cranes, and other ancillary equipment. This equipment is essential for establishing a fabrication lab adjacent to their training center, significantly enhancing their educational infrastructure.

I was made aware that Rhoads is currently undergoing significant expansion of its shipyard facilities and workforce to meet an increasing demand from both government and commercial sectors in the shipbuilding industry. With a workforce that has grown from 150 employees in 2019 to 375 in 2023, and with plans to recruit an additional 200 workers in 2024, Rhoads is committed to strengthening their workforce through expanded in-house training at their advanced on-site training center. Looking forward, Rhoads projects the employment of over 1,000 full-time employees within the next five years, underscoring the critical need for this grant to support their expansive training initiatives.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my views. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this request for information. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me or Donnell Sheppard at 202-225-4315.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chrissy Houlahan".

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress