

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
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December 7, 2016

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting and defending America's free enterprise system, supports S. 612, as modified, the "Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act" and urges the House to promptly approve this conference report.

The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, which includes the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016, would ensure the viability of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works programs including navigation, flood risk management, recreation, and infrastructure and environmental stewardship, would be an important step toward providing critical economic benefits to the nation. This bill would authorize 31 new Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works projects, while creating policy changes to require the Corps to update its reservoir operations, and establish new programs such as grants for innovative water technologies.

This measure would continue to build upon the streamlining provisions in the WRDA 2014, to allow expedited approval for modifications to existing Corps projects. Additionally, the bill expands the role of local partners in using non-federal interests in implementation and coordination with Corps projects. Finally, critical investment in the country's aging drinking and wastewater infrastructure would continue to grow as a part of this legislation. Completing WRDA as part of the WIIN Act this year will continue the commitment congress made in 2014 to authorize new projects every two years.

The Chamber also applauds the inclusion in the WIIN Act of language addressing deficiencies in the regulations currently applicable to the control of coal combustion residuals. The bipartisan language provides for the development and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approval of state permitting programs that are consistent with or superior to applicable federal regulations. This language also enhances the EPA's enforcement power, thereby removing citizen suits as the sole means of enforcement of such regulations. Further, the provisions provide the needed flexibility to tailor specific compliance plans on a site-specific basis.

Additionally, the Chamber commends the conferees for declining to impose permanent requirements for domestically produced the iron and steel for use in projects funded under the

Safe Drinking Water Act. While so-called “Buy America” mandates may appear beneficial to certain sectors of the U.S. economy, the reality is that such requirements are counter-productive and drive up public infrastructure costs, unduly burden contractor supply chains, and reduce overall project competition.

The Chamber urges you to support S. 612 as modified, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, and may consider votes on, or in relation to, this bill in our annual *How They Voted* scorecard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" being the most prominent parts.

R. Bruce Josten