

December 7, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Pelosi, and Minority Leader Reid:

The undersigned organizations would like to express our support for the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act, and urge you to quickly take up and pass the legislation. In particular, we would like to highlight our support for Section 1108, "Funding for Harbor Maintenance Programs," a provision that demonstrates continued commitment to the health of our nation's ports and harbors.

Ports serve a critical function in the maritime infrastructure. They are the primary embarkation and entry points for more than 95% (by volume) of overseas trade produced or consumed by the U.S. Physical impediments to the movement of goods through ports, such as shallow depths that limit the size of ships, the lack of access to interconnecting modes of transportation, or the narrowing of channels that increase the risk of ship collisions can cause significant delays and impose tremendous costs on shipping. Therefore, funding for the adequate maintenance of the waterway systems in the U.S. is critical to ensuring that products that consumers want and need can continue to safely and efficiently be delivered without incident, and is paramount to maintaining and enhancing U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace.

For many years, waterways users paid a tax into the HMTF based on the value of their cargo, but the funds were underutilized for the intended purpose of paying for the maintenance and dredging of critical waterways. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has reported that almost 30 percent of commercial vessel calls at U.S. ports are constrained due to inadequate channel depths, and yet the HMTF currently has a surplus of \$9 billion of unreachable funds.

WRRDA 2014 made great strides towards correcting this long-standing issue by including a schedule that increases yearly the percentage of HMTF authorized funds to be appropriated from total payments into the fund. These percentages increase until 2025, when 100 percent of the payments made into the fund are to be appropriated. The WIIN Act takes the next step to address an unintended consequence of a percentage-based allocation. The Administration's estimate of HMT revenues can change significantly, as it did this year, resulting in a funding target that was less than the FY 2016 appropriation. This could result in funding reductions and then large jumps in the HMT target when revenue estimates increase, making the target harder to achieve. Section 1108 corrects for this unintended result to ensure appropriations from the fund continue on pace.

The undersigned organizations strongly support your leadership to improve our nation's infrastructure, and we urge you to quickly take up and pass the WIIN Act.

Sincerely,

American Association of Port Authorities  
American Chemistry Council  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Forest and Paper Association  
American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers  
American Great Lakes Ports Association  
American Petroleum Institute  
American Road and Transportation Builders Association  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
American Waterways Operators  
Big River Coalition  
Dredging Contractors of America

Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition  
Lake Carriers' Association  
Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Mining Association  
National Retail Federation  
National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association  
Portland Cement Association  
Retail Industry Leaders Association  
The Fertilizer Institute  
Waterways Council, Inc.  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce