

May 19, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water Resources & Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tim Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water Resources & Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Shuster and Gibbs, and Ranking Members Rahall and Bishop:

Congratulations on completion of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) Conference Report. We are excited about many of the provisions included.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) applauds your efforts and the work of your staff in bringing forward fiscally sound legislation that will create jobs, spur economic development, provide for an expansion of international trade, and reform bureaucracy.

We especially appreciate the inclusion of:

- The assessment of the operation and maintenance needs of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.
- Authorization for channel improvement projects for the Sabine Neches Waterway and the Freeport Harbor Channel, and the updated authorization for the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.
- Eligibility for inland and intracoastal waterways navigation systems and navigation of a coastal or inland harbor in the newly created Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program.
- The Public Private Partnership (P3) Pilot Program. The State of Texas has had demonstrable success in using P3s for infrastructure projects and looks forward to seeing this important financial tool being available to help address the needs of our waterways and ports.
- Repeal of the requirement for reconnaissance studies.
- Consolidation and elimination of duplicative studies and the requirement for concurrent reviews; including:
 - removal of a reconnaissance study prior to undertaking a feasibility study; and
 - vertical integration of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) review process.

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- Allowing non-federal interests to contribute their own funds to advance studies and projects to the maximum extent practicable and expanding their ability to contribute funds to expedite the permitting process.
- The Non-Federal Implementation Pilot Program.
- The steps taken toward requiring more money from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to go toward operation and maintenance activities.

TxDOT also appreciates your efforts to ensure that water resources bills return to a two year authorization cycle.

We look forward to enactment of the Conference Report and working with you in preparation of the next Water Resources Development Act. Please feel free to contact either of us at (512) 463-1965 or your staff may contact Melanie Alvord in our Federal Affairs Office at (202) 434-0209.

Sincerely,



Jeff Austin, III
Commissioner
Texas Transportation Commission



Jeff Moseley
Commissioner
Texas Transportation Commission

cc: Texas Transportation Commission
LtGen J.F. Weber, Executive Director, TxDOT
The Honorable Blake Farenthold
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
The Honorable John Carter
The Honorable John Culberson
The Honorable Roger Williams
The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable David Dewhurst
The Honorable Joe Straus
Eduardo Campirano, President, Texas Ports Association
John LaRue, Chair, TxDOT Ports Advisory Committee
Dan Harmon, Director, Maritime Division, TxDOT
Trent Thomas, Interim Director, Federal Affairs, TxDOT
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Sarah Bagwell, Maritime Division, TxDOT

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