



## **SOUTH CAROLINA PORTS**

Patrick W. McKinney  
*Chairman*  
*Charleston*

August 17, 2016

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Pamela P. Lackey  
*Vice Chair*  
*Columbia*

Willie E. Jeffries  
*Secretary*  
*Elloree*

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

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

Mike Sisk  
*Treasurer*  
*Lexington*

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
House Transportation &  
Infrastructure Committee  
2251 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chairman  
Senate Environment and Public  
Works Committee  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Bill H. Stern  
*Chairman Emeritus*  
*Columbia*

Whitemarsh S. Smith, III  
*Charleston*

David J. Posek  
*Pawleys Island*

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader McConnell, Chairmen Shuster and Inhofe:

Kurt D. Grindstaff  
*Hilton Head*

We write today as the board of the South Carolina Ports Authority to urge September action on the 2016 Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) pending in both the House and Senate. Our responsibility is oversight of the operations, governance, and investments made by the port network in South Carolina.

Richard L. Stanley  
*Greenville*

Ex-officio Members:

Christy A. Hall  
*Secretary - SCDOT*

Robert M. Hitt, III  
*Secretary - SCDOT*

This bill is of utmost importance to a number of states, including ours, South Carolina. Both versions of the bill include a critical construction authorization for dredging the Port of Charleston. The 52-foot depth is needed now to accommodate larger, neo-Panamax container ships 24-hours up and down the East coast. Without the authorization, this project – currently under budget and ahead of schedule – could quickly fall behind schedule, placing a huge burden on regional, national and even global commerce. With this authorization, our port will continue to be the Army Corps of Engineer's poster child for the new SMART Planning process, as well as become the deepest port on the East coast. The Southeast is the major exporting region on the East Coast and, as a result, needs the deepest harbor to facilitate exports which are vital to the prosperity of the U.S. economy.

James I. Newsome, III  
*President and CEO*  
*Charleston*

Harbor deepening is not a standalone issue for a major container port like Charleston. It is part of a broader picture of substantial investments being made to facilitate trade growth and the deployment of ultra large container ships. The port itself is investing over \$1 billion in the next five years in new and improved terminal facilities to support this goal. The state of South Carolina is investing another \$700 million. The efficacy and timing of these investments are severely compromised if harbor deepening is not approved promptly.



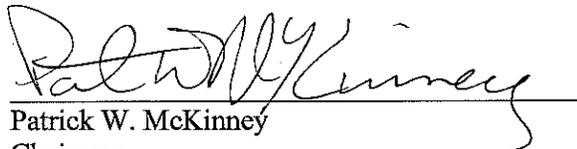
We congratulate Chairmen Inhofe and Shuster on timely and efficient mark ups of WRDA, but without final action on the bill, your work will be for naught, and our port's future will be hanging in the balance awaiting Congressional action.

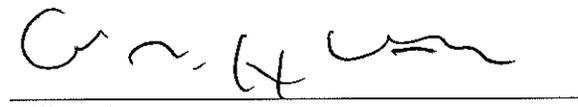
The Port of Charleston is the economic development engine for our state and the entire region. In South Carolina alone, it facilitates nearly 200,000 jobs and generates about \$53 billion in economic activity annually. Our nation cannot afford congressional inaction on WRDA – global commerce will be disrupted, jobs will be lost and the nation's overall GDP will suffer.

Evidencing unprecedented support for such a deep draft navigation project, the South Carolina State Legislature put the entire anticipated amount of its cost share, \$300 million, in a bank account in Columbia in 2012. We think it is fair to say that few, if any, such deepening projects have seen such a tangible statement of support so far in advance of completion. This is part of the \$700 million of investment being made by the state of South Carolina in port-related infrastructure cited above.

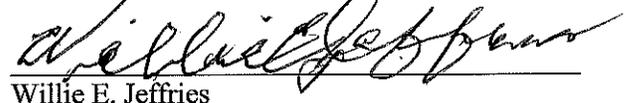
Please make WRDA a priority for September. Let's not wait for an uncertain lame duck session to address this important bill.

Sincerely,

  
Patrick W. McKinney  
Chairman

  
Bill H. Stern  
Chairman Emeritus

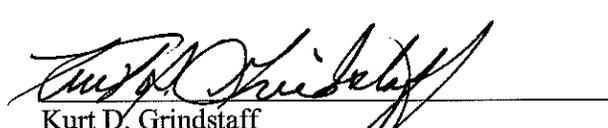
  
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Treasurer

  
Whitmarsh S. Smith, III  
Member

  
David J. Posek  
Member

  
Kurt D. Grindstaff  
Member

  
Richard L. Stanley  
Member



cc: The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
The Honorable Tim Scott  
The Honorable Mark Sanford  
The Honorable Joe Wilson  
The Honorable Jeff Duncan  
The Honorable Trey Gowdy  
The Honorable Mick Mulvaney  
The Honorable James Clyburn  
The Honorable Tom Rice