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May 16, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall
Ranking Member
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The American Soybean Association wishes to express our support for the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) Conference Report. We greatly appreciate your efforts to bring forward this legislation which makes meaningful reforms and long-term investments in our critical waterways infrastructure system.

U.S. soybean farmers need a reliable waterways infrastructure to move their soybeans to market. Soybeans are our nation's largest agricultural export, and approximately two-thirds of the soybeans we export are shipped out of ports in the Mississippi Gulf Region. Of that, nearly 90 percent rely on the inland waterways system to arrive at those ports, so having reliable and efficient waterways and ports is essential to maintaining our competitiveness in global markets.

Specific aspects of the WRRDA supported by ASA include provisions to:

- free up money and increase the capacity of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund;
- annually increase the amount of funding that is provided from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) for its intended purposes of port maintenance and dredging;
- streamline environmental reviews;
- increase Corps flexibility to maintain navigation during low water events; and
- promote the use of alternative financing and public-private partnerships to fund waterways infrastructure.

ASA strongly supports this WRRDA Conference Report and we urge its passage and enactment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Gaesser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ray Gaesser
President