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For Immediate Release

Contact: Ann McCulloch, 703-373-2252,
amcculloch@vesselalliance.com

Vessel Operators Praise Final WRRDA Agreement, Urge Quick Congressional Passage

ARLINGTON, VA – On behalf of the nation’s tugboat, towboat and barge operators, AWO President & CEO Tom Allegretti issued the following statement praising House and Senate leaders for their hard work in forging critically needed waterways infrastructure legislation and urged Congress to quickly pass the Water Resources Reform and Development Act and send it to the President to be signed into law.

“AWO is very pleased to see that the comprehensive legislation includes a number of important provisions of the Inland Waterways Capital Development Plan that will help to ensure the reliability of the nation’s waterways infrastructure – a change to the federal cost-share for the overdue, over-budget Olmsted locks and dam project; a revised threshold for determining what constitutes a major rehabilitation project eligible for Inland Waterways Trust Fund dollars; prioritization of projects based on risk and economic benefit; and reforms to project delivery timeframes. We are also pleased to see increased target levels for spending Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund monies.”

“While AWO will continue to join other waterways stakeholders in seeking passage of legislation that includes an industry-supported increase to the diesel fuel fee that vessel operators pay, the

progress that has been made on meaningful water resources development legislation is substantial. AWO members appreciate the strong bipartisan leadership that has brought us to this point and Congressional recognition of the national need for a robust, well-maintained waterways transportation system.”

Mr. Allegretti specifically thanked Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and David Vitter (R-LA), Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee; Reps. Bill Shuster (R-PA) and Nick Rahall (D-WV), Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee; and Reps. Bob Gibbs (R-OH) and Tim Bishop (D-GA), Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment. He also acknowledged the work of RIVER Act (S. 407) sponsors Sens. Bob Casey (D-PA), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Al Franken (D-MN); and WAVE 4 (H.R. 1149) lead cosponsors Reps. Ed Whitfield (R-KY) and Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) and their 31 colleagues who sponsored the bill.

“The steadfast commitment shown by these Members of Congress and the many other Senators and Representatives who have recognized the need for a vital and vibrant U.S. waterways infrastructure has produced bipartisan legislation that is good for our nation. We urge swift Congressional passage and Presidential signature of this critical bill so that our industry can keep moving the nation’s commerce safely and efficiently, keeping us strong and competitive for decades to come.”

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