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May 23, 2016

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water Resources and
Environment
585 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water Resources and
Environment
505 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shuster and Gibbs and Ranking Members DeFazio and Napolitano:

Founded in 1992, Great Lakes Maritime Task Force is the largest labor/management coalition ever assembled to promote waterborne commerce on the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway. Our 84 members represent every facet of shipping on our Fourth Sea Coast.

We are writing to express our full support for introduction and passage of the as yet unnumbered Water Resources Development Act of 2016. Two provisions in particular are of great importance to Lakes/Seaway shipping. Sec. 108 takes the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) off budget in 2027. This will end the uncertainty that is inherent with the annual budget process. Sec. 109 establishes a beneficial use of dredged material pilot program. Many of the Confined Disposal Facilities on the Lakes are near or have reached capacity and expansion or new construction is a lengthy and expensive process. Much of the sediment dredged from Lakes ports and waterways is suitable to beach nourishment, wetland restoration... and Sec. 109 will encourage increased use of dredged material for such beneficial applications.

We also support Sec. 106, which requires the Corps to assess the condition of jetties and breakwaters and report to Congress on the cost to restore and maintain them. Many are aged and in need of repair.

The draft bill does not contain one provision that is much needed, a requirement to apply the 10 percent Great Lakes Navigation System HMTF funds to baseline HMTF funds. More than 17 million cubic yards of sediment still clog Great Lakes ports and waterways. We must increase funding for Great Lakes dredging.

Please give our thanks to the legislators who have crafted this legislation. It represents an excellent starting point and will surely lead to an outstanding bill.

Very respectfully,

Thomas Curelli
President

James H.I. Weakley
2nd Vice President-Membership

Brian D. Krus
1st Vice President-Positions & Resolutions

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