



Lake Carriers' Association

The Greatest Ships on the Great Lakes

JAMES H. I. WEAKLEY, PRESIDENT

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May 23, 2016

Via E-mail: beth.spivey@mail.house.gov

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:

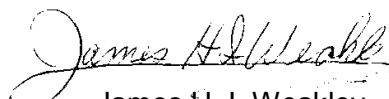
Lake Carriers' Association (LCA) represents 14 American companies that operate 56 U.S.-flag vessels (lakers) on the Great Lakes and carry the raw materials that drive the nation's economy: iron ore and fluxstone for the steel industry, aggregate and cement for the construction industry, coal for power generation, as well as salt, sand and grain. Collectively, our members can transport more than 100 million tons of dry-bulk cargo per year and employ more than 1,600 men and women, all of whom are U.S. citizens or legally admitted aliens, and provide annual wages and benefits of approximately \$125 million. In turn, the cargos our members carry generate and sustain more than 103,000 jobs in the eight Great Lakes states and have an annual economic impact of more than \$20 billion.

We have reviewed the draft of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 and support its introduction and passage. Especially important to us are the provisions that take the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) off budget starting in 2027 (Sec. 108) and establish a beneficial use of dredged material pilot program (Sec. 109). Sec. 108 will end the uncertainty that comes with being subject to the annual budget process. Increased beneficial uses of dredged material (Sec. 109) will prolong the life of some Confined Disposal Facilities and potentially lessen the cost of dredging certain ports and waterways.

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 bill would be strengthened by a provision requiring application of 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, so our members cannot fully utilize their vessels' carrying capacity. We must increase funding for dredging of Great Lakes ports and the connecting channels.

Very respectfully,


James H. I. Weakley
President

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The Association Representing Operators of U.S.-Flag Vessels on the Great Lakes Since 1880

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SOO MARINE SUPPLY, INC. ♦ VANENKEVORT TUG & BARGE INC.