



The American
Waterways Operators



June 2, 2022

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

The members of American Waterways Operators (AWO) and Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) thank you for your leadership and commitment to the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) biennial process.

America's inland waterways system includes 12,000 miles of commercially operated and maintained navigable channels directly affecting 28 states. The inland waterways system is tasked with transporting the nation's bulk commodities, keeping America competitive as the most energy-efficient, lowest cost, and environmentally friendly surface transportation mode. In 2020, more than 478 million tons of commodities valued at \$111.3 billion transited the inland waterways, supporting more than 541,000 American jobs.

For both planning and operations, it is important for stakeholders to have the certainty that infrastructure projects will be authorized and approved. As you move past House passage and into conference with the Senate, we ask that you accept Section 103 of the Senate WRDA 2022. This section adjusts the cost-share formula for the construction and major rehabilitation of inland waterways navigation projects from the current 65 percent general revenues and 35 percent Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) to 75 percent general revenues and 25 percent IWTF. This policy change will provide significant advantages to the nation and the taxpayer by finishing projects faster—and reducing final project cost and the amount of time communities must wait for the resulting economic benefits from projects. For inland waterways projects, there is no time to waste.

AWO and WCI also encourage you to accept the inclusion of Section 130 of Senate WRDA 2022 in conference. This section will help provide resilience and efficiency for all users of the inland waterways and place our coastal and inland infrastructure on a level playing field.

Passing this legislation in regular order is critical to keeping America competitive by ensuring waterways reliability. AWO and WCI offer our full support to pass this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Carpenter

Jennifer Carpenter
President and CEO
American Waterways Operators

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Tracy Zea
President and CEO
Waterways Council, Inc.