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December 6, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 2051

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senate Leaders Schumer and McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

Whether in challenging or prosperous times, Georgia is heavily dependent on free-flowing commerce through our state's port facilities in Savannah and Brunswick. These facilities rank among the busiest ports in the nation and have played a major role in positioning the Peach state as the number one state in the nation to do business for over a decade. The Georgia Ports Authority leverages innovative solutions to keep cargo on the move and hard work in support of key industries for our nation's economy.

Chairmen Carper and Graves and Ranking Members Capito and Larsen have embraced similar dedication to innovation and hard work to put together this final bill. They, along with committee members and staff should be applauded for their collaborative, bipartisan efforts to authorize new and necessary investments for our nation's federal navigation channels and other transportation infrastructure.

The WRDA conference bill includes many provisions specific to American port interests. The most significant for our industry are the proposed changes to construction and maintenance depth thresholds. By increasing the federal responsibility up to -55 feet, WRDA enables more efficient transportation of U.S. imports and exports by improves non-Federal sponsor affordability of constructing and maintaining deeper navigation channels.

Specific to Georgia's port infrastructure, the inclusion of a study to deepen the Savannah Harbor in this year's WRDA acknowledges the importance of the future growth of this strategic American gateway. Enabling this key hub for global commerce to accommodate larger vessels will complement the significant infrastructure investments that the state of Georgia is making and encouraging growth for the Southeast and beyond.

To that end, I urge the prompt consideration and passage of the final Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA) through the House and Senate without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Griff Lynch", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Griff Lynch
President & Chief Executive Officer