

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2013

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Member Kaptur:

We request you provide sufficient funding for the Department of the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Operation and Maintenance program to address the inadequate maintenance of harbors throughout the country. Our nation's ports handle 80% of our foreign trade, which support over 13 million jobs annually. These economic benefits, we feel, make it imperative our nation's ports and harbors are modernized.

Federal ports and harbors are a critical component of America's infrastructure and economy, requiring regular maintenance to ensure their efficient use. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, nearly 1000 federal ports and harbors have not been adequately maintained due to inadequate budget requests and appropriations. In addition, the Army Corps has estimated that top-priority harbors (those that handle about 90 percent of the commercial traffic) are

dredged to their authorized depths and widths only about 35 percent of the time. Inadequate funding has resulted in narrower and shallower channels due to insufficient dredging, leading to light-loading. Light-loading increases the costs for everyone – the producers, shippers, and consumers, not to mention the increased risks for vessel grounding, collisions, and system delays.

Costs attributable to delays in the nation's inland waterways system totaled \$33 billion in 2010. Further, projected losses over the coming decade may total nearly \$1 trillion in lost economic opportunity, while the estimated gap in funding for that same period is less than \$16 billion. Lack of adequate maintenance has far reaching consequences on both the general public and the national economy, and investments in our nations harbors and waterways can provide huge dividends our Nation's continuing economic recovery.

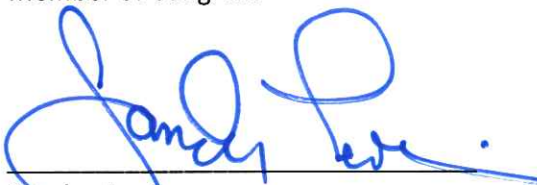
As you know, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) was created in 1986 to establish a dedicated funding source for dredging and other required maintenance of the nation's coastal harbors. Cargo vessels are assessed a user fee on imported and domestic cargo arriving at U.S. ports and harbors. While recent annual revenue from these fees would support the projected annual need for maintenance work, only about half of that amount, on average, has been spent on its intended purpose. At the beginning of Fiscal Year 2014, the balance of the trust fund is estimated to total approximately \$8,098,000,000. With 50% of the GDP estimated to come from international trade by 2050, HMTF revenues need to be utilized for their intended purposes.

As you write the FY14 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, we request that you include sufficient funding for the Civil Works Operations and Maintenance program to address the inadequate maintenance of harbors throughout the country. Failure to address this critical backlog in dredging and harbor maintenance will further jeopardize our nation's ports and harbors, while putting at risk the jobs of many hard working Americans. This issue is critical to improving our nation's infrastructure and strengthening American competitiveness and the economy.

Sincerely,



Dan Benishek MD (MI-01)
Member of Congress



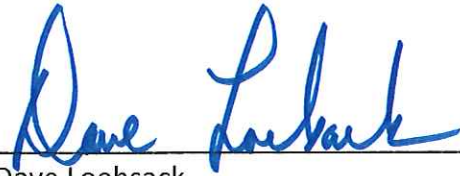
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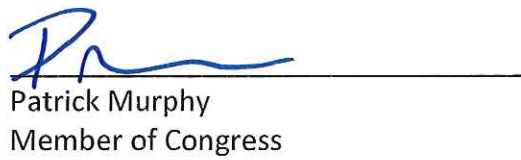
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