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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

April 2, 2014

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development, and Related Agencies
2362-B Rayburn House Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As you begin your work on the FY15 Energy and Water Appropriations Act, we request that you provide sufficient funding for the Department of the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Operations and Maintenance program to address the inadequate maintenance of harbors and ports throughout our country. As our nation's ports handle 80% of our foreign trade, supporting over 13 million jobs across America, we feel the economic benefit of this vital infrastructure must not be ignored.

Federal ports and harbors are a critical component of America's infrastructure and economy, requiring regular maintenance to ensure their efficient use. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has reported that over 1000 federally controlled ports and harbors are lacking sufficient maintenance due to inadequate funding. In addition, USACE estimates that top-priority harbors are dredged to their authorized depths and widths only about 35% of the time.

Inadequate funding has resulted in narrower and shallower channels due to insufficient dredging, leading to light-loading of commercial vessels. Light-loading ultimately increases costs to all Americans—from producers to shippers to consumers—not to mention the increased risk for vessel grounding, collision, and system delay.

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 operations of the nation's harbors. While recent annual revenue from these fees would support the projected annual need for maintenance work, only about half that amount, on average, has been spent on its intended purpose. As nearly 50% of GDP is estimated to come from international trade by 2050, we feel it is imperative that HMTF revenues be fully utilized for their intended purposes.

As you write the FY15 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, we request that you include sufficient funding for the Civil Works Operations and Maintenance program to address the critical structural needs of our nation's ports and harbors. Failure to address the backlog of both dredging and harbor

maintenance will further jeopardize our nation's waterways, putting American jobs at risk. It is our belief that well maintained ports and harbors will strengthen American competitiveness and work to improve our economy, and we appreciate your consideration for this request.

Sincerely,



Dan Benishek M.D
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



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