

December 2, 2014

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Hatch:

The National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association and the following state organizations support the bipartisan S. 2955 introduced by Senators Casey, Alexander, Harkin, Klobuchar and Franken, that increases the user fee that barge and towing companies pay into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) to modernize our nation's waterways system. This user fee which is currently set at 20 cents per gallon should be increased by 9 cents to 29 cents per gallon to update and improve U.S. competitiveness in the global economy. This user fee is matched by treasury funds and is dedicated to new construction and major rehabilitation of the inland waterways system, particularly locks and dams. Not only is this increase supported by commercial operators who pay it, it is also supported by those who benefit indirectly from the river through the export of our products and import of goods needed to do grow our crops. As corn and soybean farmers it is our hope that the Senate Finance Committee will support this legislation as part of any appropriate revenue measure on the horizon.

The inland waterways provide capacity and the most cost-competitive transportation option for our corn and soybeans. The facts are clear:

- 60% of the nation's export-bound grain is transported on the inland waterways.
- Our fertilizer supplies move up the river helping to keep costs low as well as supplying a vital input so American farmers can keep growing record crops to meet the domestic and world demands of feed, fuel and fiber.
- The Panama Canal expansion will create opportunities for increased American trade, but not if our channels are not dredged and our locks and dams are not functioning.
- American consumers benefit from transportation cost-savings made possible by the inland waterways; for every \$1 invested in our inland waterways, \$10 is returned in national benefits.

America's locks and dams were built during our parent's and grandparent's generation during tough economic times because our nation's leaders understood that for the U.S to be successful we needed reliable and efficient transportation infrastructure. However, we have not upheld our commitment and the time has come where our waterways infrastructure needs reinvestment and recapitalization. We respectfully ask that your committee consider this important legislation as soon as possible. A similar letter is being sent to the House Ways and Means Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

National Corn Growers Association
American Soybean Association
Arkansas Soybean Association
Illinois Corn Growers Association
Illinois Soybean Association
Iowa Corn Growers Association
Iowa Soybean Association
Indiana Corn Growing Association
Indiana Soybean Alliance
Kansas Corn Growers Association
Kentucky Corn Growers Association
Kentucky Soybean Association
Maryland Grain Producers Association
Michigan Corn Growers Association
Michigan Soybean Association
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association
Missouri Soybean Association
Nebraska Corn Board
Nebraska Corn Growers Association
New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association
North Dakota Soybean Growers Association
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association
Tennessee Soybean Association
Wisconsin Corn Growers Association
Wisconsin Soybean Association

cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee