



February 9, 2017

Mr. Mark LaHare
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
CEMVN-PDC-CEC
7400 Leake Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118

Dear Mr. LaHare:

Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) is the national public policy organization that advocates for a modern properly funded and well-maintained system of inland waterways and ports. The inland waterways sustain more than 541,000 jobs worth \$29 billion, while in 2015 moving nearly 600 million tons of cargo valued at \$229 billion safely and efficiently.

The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Lock is a critical component of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and our nation's inland waterways transportation supply chain. Its continued safe and reliable operation is needed to allow commerce to flow through the GIWW. This lock provides the most efficient way to move commodities from the Mississippi River to the GIWW and vice versa. For instance, without the IHNC, an alternative transportation route would add 17 days of transit of critical cargoes. The nation's economy depends on the replacement of this outdated lock that was constructed in 1923 and we support the recommendation contain in the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) to build a new 900 feet long x 110 feet wide x 22 feet deep lock chamber.

Replacing the IHNC lock would benefit all stakeholders, as well as local communities. The proposed lock design would facilitate fewer trips through the safer, more efficient structure. This would reduce maintenance costs to the nation, decrease traffic congestion from bridge openings, lessen the number of barges waiting in the queue near the lock, diminish noise for surrounding neighborhoods, and increase air quality. With a strong benefit to cost ratio of 4.78 to 1, constructing this new lock is a wise investment for traffic utilization.

WCI strongly urges the Corps to move forward with the Tentatively Selected Plan to replace the existing lock with a new lock that is 900 feet long x 110 feet wide x 22 feet deep to be constructed between the banks of the IHNC, north of the Claiborne Avenue Bridge and south of the Florida Avenue Bridge.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Toohy
President/CEO