February 26, 2016

Chairman Bill Shuster  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515  

Chairman Bob Gibbs  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515  

Dear Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Subcommittee Chairman Gibbs, and Ranking Member Napolitano:

We are writing to ask for your support for inclusion in WRDA 2016 of a modification in the definition of what constitutes a “major rehabilitation project” on the inland waterways transportation system.

Currently, routine operation and maintenance of a navigation lock or dam is funded from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Operation and Maintenance account until such time as that cost exceeds $20 million. At that point, the project work becomes eligible for funding from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF). This threshold creates an incentive for the Corps to withhold initiating routine maintenance until such time as the aggregate cost exceeds $20 million and then re-classify the work as “major rehabilitation” and shift the cost to the IWTF.

In 2015 an unscheduled maintenance outage at a lock on the Ohio River cost the customers of one barge carrier $3.6 million. In 2014, the lack of a single $5 million spare part shut down the Algiers Lock, resulting in $142 million in economic harm to shippers.

We respectfully request that the threshold for classifying work as either Operation and Maintenance or Major Rehabilitation be changed from the current level of $20 million to $50 million. An analysis of projects qualifying for trust fund eligibility demonstrates that the average cost is $55.1 million. Thus, addressing this anomaly will not impact truly major rehabilitation work. It will however address the unintended incentive to not maintain our navigation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
John J. Duncan, Jr.  
Member of Congress

[Signature]
Daniel W. Lipinski  
Member of Congress
Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress

Larry Buchon
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

Rod Blum
Member of Congress

Brian Babin
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress

Blaine Luetkemeyer
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Dave W Loebsack
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Rodney Davis
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John Shimkus
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Darin LaHood
Member of Congress

Todd Rokita
Member of Congress

Garret Graves
Member of Congress

Rick Nolan
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress