



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2018

Contact: Debra Calhoun,
202/765-2153; 301/332-0813 (cell);
dcalhoun@waterwayscouncil.org

WCI APPLAUDS HOUSE PASSAGE OF STRONG FY 2018 OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL THAT FUNDS U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS HIGHLIGHTS: FULL-USE OF INLAND WATERWAYS TRUST FUND, RECORD O&M FUNDING, EXCEEDS TARGET FOR HARBOR MAINTENANCE SPENDING

Washington, DC – Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) praised today’s passage in the House of the FY2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill by a vote of 256-167. The bill includes record funding for the Corps of Engineers in the FY2018 Energy & Water Development appropriations bill.

The level of FY2018 funding for the Corps’ Civil Works mission in the bill is \$6.83 billion, an increase of \$789 million from FY2017 appropriated funding, and a 36% increase above the President’s FY2018 budget request of \$5.002 billion.

Highlights of the bill include:

--Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF)-supported projects will receive full use of estimated annual revenues plus additional balances from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund with at least \$399 million to be made available for priority navigation projects in FY2018, a 128% increase over the Administration’s request of \$175 million.

--The Construction account was allocated \$2.085 billion, more than a doubling of the \$1.02 billion proposed in the FY2018 budget request.

--The Operations & Maintenance (O&M) account was increased to \$3.63 billion or 17.1% above the initial budget request of \$3.1 billion.

--For the Investigations account, \$123 million was allocated, up 43% from the President’s request of \$86 million.

--The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) is funded at \$1.4 billion, up 50% above the President’s request of \$933 million.

--On the Navigation Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP), due to the earmark constraint within Congress, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) will have the ability to provide additional investigation dollars to preconstruction engineering and design (PED), but we will not find out until 60 days after enactment of the bill when the Corps releases its work plan.

--The Omnibus bill did not include a new 10-year, \$1.037 billion user fee to be paid by commercial operators on the inland waterways. The proposal was included in the President's FY2018 budget request. WCI strongly opposed this Administration proposal.

Of the FY 2018 bill, WCI President/CEO Michael J. Toohey, said, "WCI is grateful for the bipartisan action by the House today in passing the record funding levels for the Corps of Engineers to continue its critical work on construction of four priority navigation projects across the inland waterways transportation system. We hope there will be quick passage in the Senate and then the President will sign the bill into law."

Waterways Council, Inc. is the national public policy organization advocating for a modern and well-maintained national system of ports and inland waterways. The group is supported by waterways carriers, shippers, port authorities, agriculture, labor and conservation organizations, shipping associations and waterways advocacy groups from all regions of the country. Visit www.waterwayscouncil.org.