

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 7, 2022

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Chairman
Committee on Environment & Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs Carper and DeFazio and Ranking Members Capito and Graves:

Thank you for your continued efforts to maintain a biennial Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). This process provides each of us and our constituents an opportunity to address important navigation, ecosystem, and flood protection issues critical to our communities. We write in support of inclusion of section 103 of S. 4136, the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 (WRDA) in the final bill. Section 103 would adjust the cost-share for inland waterway projects to 75% general revenue/ 25% Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF). Section 103 is paramount to ensuring reliable inland waterways transportation and will help the nation address growing concerns regarding supply chain efficiencies and emissions in the transportation sector.

Historically, Congress and the Nation have consistently recognized the vital contribution that waterborne transportation makes to overall economic prosperity. As a result, public expenditures to maintain navigation channels and build related infrastructure were among the nation's earliest investments. However, our constituents have a growing concern over our aging inland waterways infrastructure as they become more vital to our economy with agriculture exports increasing each year. According to the USACE, more than 80% of the locks and dams on the inland waterways system are past their design life of 50 years.

The inland waterways are naturally situated in the breadbasket of America, which gives American farmers competitive advantages globally. This advantage provides the United States with an opportunity to assist in feeding the world while making up the lost food from the Ukraine and Russian conflict. It's important to note the inland waterways system plays a more prominent role in domestic transportation. One barge can carry approximately 1,750 short tons of dry cargo compared to 16 rail cars and 70 semi-tractor trailers. Additionally, the efficiency gained from transportation by barge is unmatched by other modes of surface transportation. Barge transportation can move one ton of goods 675 miles per gallon of fuel compared to 472 for rail and 151 for trucking – making it one of the most efficient, safest, and environmentally friendly means of surface transportation.

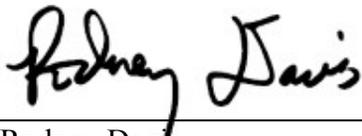
Currently, construction and major rehabilitation projects on the nation's inland waterways transportation system have a cost-share at 65% general revenue/ 35% Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF), per a cost-share adjustment in 2020. Prior to 2020, inland waterways had a cost-share for construction and major rehabilitation projects of 50% general revenue/ 50% IWTF.

In WRDA 2016, Congress changed the construction cost-share attributable to deepening coastal ports with depths between 45 and 50 feet from 50% non-Federal sponsor/50% general revenues to 25% non-Federal project sponsor/75% general revenues. As members representing inland states with ports and facilities, we request parity with the adjustments made for coastal port construction projects and believe this adjustment would ensure fairness between port and inland waterway construction projects.

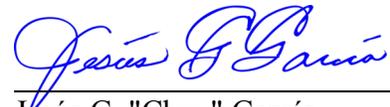
These changes were made for coastal port construction projects because finishing projects faster can reduce both final project cost and the amount of time resulting benefits from the project can be realized. This is the same argument for adjusting the cost-share for inland waterways construction and major rehabilitation projects.

As you move forward with negotiations of WRDA 2022, we respectfully urge the inclusion of section 103 of the Senate WRDA 2022.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Conor Lamb
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



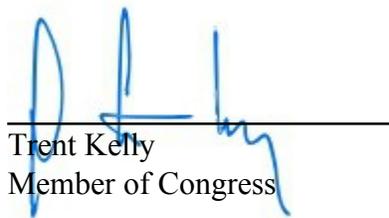
Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



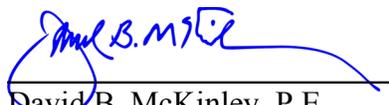
Guy Reschenthaler
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Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.
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Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Carol D. Miller
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Fleischmann
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Jim Cooper
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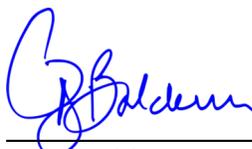
Brian Babin, D.D.S.
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Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



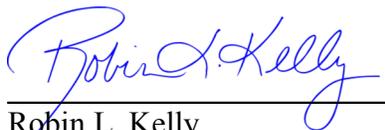
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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Andy Barr
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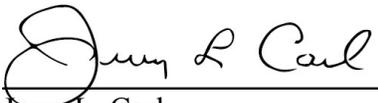
Julia Letlow
Member of Congress



Bryan Steil
Member of Congress



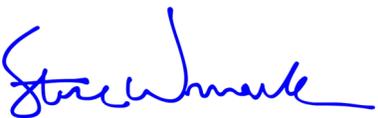
Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
Member of Congress



Jerry L. Carl
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Troy E. Nehls
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