

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2014

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairwoman, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
186 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
186 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairwoman Feinstein, and Ranking Member Alexander:

Thank you for your efforts to increase U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil works program harbor maintenance funding in your annual Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies (E&W) Appropriations Acts.

We write to request that as you are continuing negotiations with your House counterparts to complete Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) annual appropriations legislation you support a final FY15 harbor maintenance funding level that was authorized under Section 2101(b) of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014). That section established a 10-year path to fully use Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) collections for their intended purpose, with FY15 being the first year. It would be unfortunate if Congress failed to hit the HMT target just seven months after passing this legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support. We also ask that the additional operations and maintenance funding be specifically provided for authorized harbor maintenance purposes.

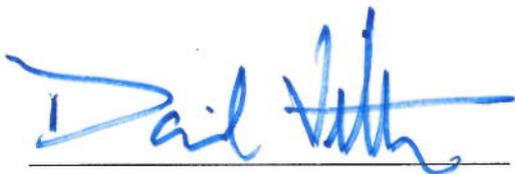
More than \$1.8 billion in annual HMT revenue is being collected specifically to meet the nation's annual authorized harbor maintenance needs for harbors of all sizes. Unfortunately, annual appropriations have been significantly less than annual collections, resulting in harbors and navigation channels getting narrower and shallower due to accumulating sediment, declining dredged material disposal area capacity and deteriorating harbor structures such as breakwaters and jetties due to inadequate funding.

Harbors and navigation channels are a vital part of our nation's transportation infrastructure, and the elimination or reduction in their capacity can have significant impacts on local communities and economies as well as the national economy. WRRDA 2014 recognizes the national need to increase use of HMT collections to benefit all navigation projects, high and moderate use, emerging, underserved and Great Lakes ports, along with expanded uses at donor ports. The Army Corps of Engineers has reported that nationwide authorized channel depths are available about half of the time, and then only over half of the channel's width. This drives up the cost of U.S. exports and imports, which threatens U.S. economic growth, and increases the risk of vessel groundings and associated oil spills. Many U.S. exports compete in a very price-sensitive global market where transportation inefficiencies mean losing business to other countries. It is vitally important that the WRRDA HMT commitment be met.

While addressing increased funding is difficult, in part because of inadequate Administration funding requests, the United States should not miss opportunities to spur economic growth, improve our global competitiveness and create jobs. We urge you to work with the House to craft a final FY15 E&W Appropriations bill (or title within an omnibus appropriations bill) that meets the FY15 harbor maintenance spending target and allocation provisions under Sections 2101(b) and 2102, respectively, of WRRDA 2014 to maintain the nation's shipping channels, our nation's gateways to the global marketplace.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



DAVID VITTER

United States Senator



SHERROD BROWN

United States Senator



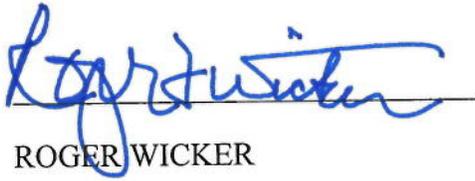
JAMES INHOFE

United States Senator



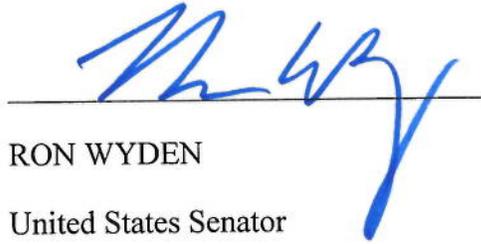
BARBARA BOXER

United States Senator



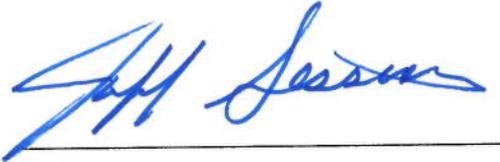
ROGER WICKER

United States Senator



RON WYDEN

United States Senator



JEFF SESSIONS

United States Senator



DEBBIE STABENOW

United States Senator



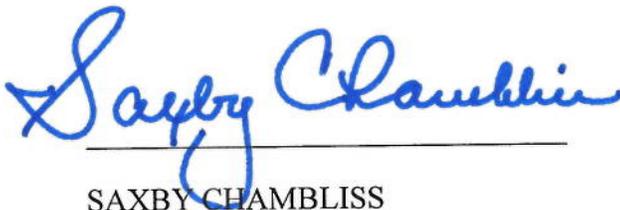
MARCO RUBIO

United States Senator



BILL NELSON

United States Senator



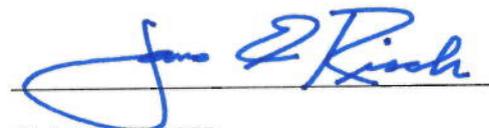
SAXBY CHAMBLISS

United States Senator



CHARLES SCHUMER

United States Senator



JAMES RISCH

United States Senator



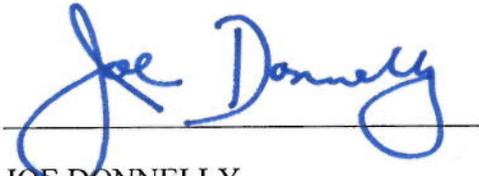
KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

United States Senator



MIKE CRAPO

United States Senator



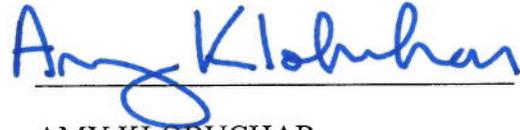
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TAMMY BALDWIN

United States Senator



TIM SCOTT

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