

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 20, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Chairman  
Environment and Public Works Committee  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
2209 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Boxer and Chairman Shuster,

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is instrumental in addressing many water resources issues important to local communities, including navigation channels, harbors, beach management, levee and dam repair, aquatic ecosystems, flood emergency and water infrastructure projects. These ventures are critical to the wellbeing of our citizens and impact job creation and economic opportunity throughout the nation. As representatives of districts that rely heavily on our nation's federal harbors and ports, and sponsors of the widely supported and bipartisan RAMP Act, we know how critical it is that our nation's ports and harbors are modernized.

Federal ports and harbors are a critical component of America's infrastructure and economy, requiring regular maintenance to ensure their efficient use. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, nearly 1,000 federal ports and harbors have not been adequately maintained due to inadequate budget requests and appropriations. In addition, the Army Corps has estimated that top-priority harbors (those that handle about 90 percent of the commercial traffic) are dredged to their authorized depths and widths only about 35 percent of the time. Inadequate funding for dredging has resulted in channels getting narrower and shallower. Light-loading increases the cost of shipping and the risk of vessel grounding and collisions.

We are writing to encourage you to support the language expressed in both the House and Senate versions of WRDA, recognizing that the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) revenues should be properly allocated and used for their intended purpose. Specifically Section 8003 of the Senate bill and Section 201 of the House bill strive to increase the amount of money allocated from harbor maintenance taxes, to provide more certainty for ports, waterways and the maritime industry.

Inadequately maintained harbors are like blocked arteries, threatening to choke off the lifeblood of our economy. With our economy attempting to recover from a major recession, America's

international trade cannot run aground because available funding needed for regular dredging of America's commercial waterways is shortchanged. It is now time for the federal government to honor its commitments to our nation's federal ports and harbors. By allocating the funds already currently available for maintenance and operation costs of our nation's ports, we will get our ports back to full capacity.

This issue is critical to improving our nation's infrastructure and strengthening American competitiveness and the economy. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Charles W. Boustany, Jr., MD  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Joe Courtney  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

CC:

Senator Max Baucus,  
Senator Thomas Carper,  
Senator Ben Cardin,  
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse  
Senator David Vitter,  
Senator John Barrasso,  
Senator James Inhofe  
Representative John J. Duncan, Jr.,  
Representative Frank LoBiondo,  
Representative Sam Graves  
Representative Shelley Moore Capito  
Representative Candice Miller  
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Representative Grace Napolitano