

November 12, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
SD-184 Dirksen Senate Office
Building Washington, DC 20510
c/o Clare Doherty

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
SH-125 Hart Senate Office
Building Washington, DC 20510
c/o Dabney Hegg

The Honorable David Price
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office
Building Washington, DC 20515
c/o Joe Carlile

The Honorable Mario Díaz-Balart
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office
Building Washington, DC 20515
c/o Doug Disrud

RE: AAPA FY 2020 THUD Appropriations Priorities

Dear Chairwoman Collins, Chairman Price, Ranking Member Reed, and Ranking Member Díaz-Balart:

As you work to reconcile and finalize FY 2020 THUD Appropriations bills, the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) would like to remind you of our priorities for programs of vital importance to the nation's seaports and the overall freight network. Details on AAPA views of funding levels and policy provisions in your respective bills follow below.

International trade through seaports accounts for over a quarter of the U.S. GDP. At the center of trade and transportation are America's seaports, which handle approximately \$6 billion worth of import and export goods daily, generate nearly 31 million jobs, and provide more than \$378 billion annually in federal, state, and local tax revenues. Seaports also are projected to handle nearly 12 million cruise passengers from around the country and the

world.

■ Port Infrastructure Development Program (MARAD)

The House bill contains \$225 million for the second year of the Port Infrastructure Development Program. The Senate bill contains \$91.6 million. In addition, the House bill's eligibility is limited to coastal ports while the Senate bill expands eligibility to both coastal and inland ports.

AAPA Position: AAPA is very concerned about both the House and Senate proposed funding levels being lower than the \$293 million provided in FY 2019 for this important program. The House funding level represents a 23% cut from last year, and the Senate funding level is a 68% cut. AAPA supports a funding level of \$300 million. AAPA is also concerned about the Senate bill's expanded eligibility of the program to inland ports, especially at the reduced funding level.

■ Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Program

The House and Senate bills both contain \$1 billion for this important program. The Senate bill also contains a 10% maximum per State.

AAPA Position: AAPA supports a funding level of \$1.5 billion for the BUILD program. AAPA opposes the Senate 10% maximum provision, which puts ports at a distinct disadvantage. Ports are national infrastructure resources that support all states, metropolitan areas, and rural supply chains. AAPA supports addition of a provision that would ensure a minimum of 25 percent of the funding be dedicated to port-related infrastructure needs.

■ Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program

The House and Senate bills both contain \$1 billion for the INFRA program.

AAPA Position: AAPA supports the Administration's proposed funding level of \$2 billion for the INFRA program. Because the funding comes primarily from the highway trust fund, there are severe limitations to the multimodal eligibility. To date, only \$200 million of multimodal eligibility remains. AAPA recommends that the multimodal caps be moved from the INFRA discretionary grant program, as well as the formula funding program that goes to the states.

■ Marine Highway Program (MARAD)

The House bill contains \$15 million for the Marine Highway Program, and the Senate bill contains \$7 million.

AAPA Position: AAPA supports the House funding level of \$15 million for the Marine

Highway Program. The Marine Highway Program is an asset that is enabling ports and communities to fully realize their potential in managing increasing freight volumes while reducing congestion in communities. AAPA ports throughout the country with marine highway designations have reported that this program provides an important option in utilizing waterways and incorporating this tool into their freight network.

■ **Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program (FRA)**

The House bill contains \$350 million, and the Senate bill contains \$255 million for the CRISI program.

AAPA Position: AAPA supports the House proposed funding level. The CRISI program is of growing importance to the port industry because of the port rail access eligibilities of the program and the potential of stronger rail and port project partnerships.

We commend your work to swiftly resolve the FY 20 THUD Appropriations bills and your consideration of AAPA priorities in that process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Connor", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Connor
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader, House of Representatives
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader