

May 6, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
SD-131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
c/o Leif Fønnesbeck

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
SH-125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
c/o Rachael Taylor

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) is the unified and collective voice of the seaport industry, and today we are writing to ask you to provide continued robust funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program (NEP) in FY 2018 appropriations. Established in 1987 by Congress to restore and protect estuaries of significant importance, NEP is composed of 28 individual programs. President Trump has recommended eliminating the program, but many ports located in national estuaries participate in local programs.

The National Estuary Programs are an essential partner for port authorities in terms of environmental sustainability of the bays and ecosystems that are within or adjacent to ports. NEPs provide important research and analysis on bay ecosystems that assist with protection and restoration of very valuable national resources. NEPs provide education and awareness that is important for non-regulatory and voluntary programs that are supported and implemented locally. This local support is key to the success of preservation and restoration efforts.

NEPs facilitate many stakeholders coming together and developing an appropriate Bay Plan, identifying funding for plan projects, and implementation of the Bay Plan. Priorities in a Bay Plan, for example, might be public access and recreation, environmental education, water quality and freshwater inflows, habitat protection and restoration, fish and wildlife conservation, maritime commerce and dredging, and monitoring and research. NEPs facilitate and ensure coordination of these types of activities, and to lose the funding for these activities means that other entities would need to take on that role. The cohesion that NEPs

provide communities in bringing industry, maritime and residents to the table for discussion would be lost. This map shows the [location of these estuaries](#).

We appreciate your strong support for NEPs in the past and urge continued funding for this program in a FY 2018 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Thank you in advance for considering our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt J. Nagle", with a stylized, flowing script.

Kurt J. Nagle
President and CEO