

**Remarks of Steven Cernak**  
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**Prepared for the**  
**United States House of Representatives**  
**Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**  
**Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment**

**Roundtable Discussion**  
**“America’s Water Resources Infrastructure: Concepts for the Next**  
**Water Resources Development Act”**

**October 27, 2017 - 9:30 a.m.**  
**Cruise Terminal B, PortMiami**  
**1751 North Cruise Boulevard, Miami, Florida 33132**

Chairman Shuster, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Representative Napolitano and Members, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide remarks to the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee on America’s Water Resources Infrastructure: *Concepts for the Next Water Resources Development Act*. I’m Steven Cernak, Chief Executive Officer / Port Director at Port Everglades. I’m also speaking on behalf of the Florida Ports Council and the American Association of Port Authorities as the current Chairman of the Board of both organizations. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of my counterpart, Mr. Juan Kuryla, Port Director here at Port Miami. My remarks today will focus on recommendations for WRDA adjustments and new authorizations for the Corps of Engineers navigation program.

American Association of Port Authorities and Florida Ports Council members appreciate that Congress understands the importance of our seaports role in the U.S. economy.

Constructing and maintaining the Nation's 21<sup>st</sup> century maritime infrastructure is essential to the Nation's economic future. Public ports and their private-sector partners are committed to this challenge, with plans to invest upwards of \$155 billion between 2016 and 2020 in port-related facilities. At PortMiami, more than \$800 million in anticipated capital investments have been identified during this time frame. Likewise at Port Everglades, our 5 year capital plan provides for infrastructure investments in excess of \$950 million. So in South Florida alone our collective investments are approaching \$2 Billion.

WRRDA 2014 established a visionary approach for our Nation's 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure, and WRDA 2016 provided further streamlining of Corps processes. I look forward to the next WRDA legislation to continue improvements. Our four key issues for the next WRDA are as follows:

1. WRRDA 2014 was landmark legislation establishing a path to full use of the Harbor Maintenance Tax revenues for its intended purpose, navigation channel maintenance. WRDA 2016 adjusted the annual funding target approach so that progress is made towards full HMT use each year. While we're grateful the annual funding targets are currently being met, we feel the ultimate solution is for full HMT revenues to be provided directly to the Corps of Engineers. We appreciate the bills that have been proposed to address this issue. My fellow AAPA members and I are working on an approach that accomplishes full HMT revenue use while also providing additional equity for HMT donor ports, like Port Everglades and PortMiami.

2. There are Chief of Engineer's reports recommending navigation projects receive Congressional authorization for construction. These need to be authorized and America needs to proceed with building our 21<sup>st</sup> century maritime infrastructure. (the Navigation reports recommended so far are for Houston/Galveston and Seattle). Speaking from personal experience, at Port Everglades our current deep draft navigation project took 20 years to navigate the process from study authorization to construction authorization.

3. Past WRDA's streamlining of the Corps of Engineers study process for navigation channel improvements have worked well. Three adjustments are needed in this upcoming WRDA: (1) Establish a 'scoping meeting' at the outset of the study process to enable the Corps and project sponsor to establish a preliminary scope and schedule ahead of signing the Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement; (2) Clearly define the feasibility study start and ending milestones so the Corps and cost-sharing, non-Federal partners can assure successful study completion within the 3-year timeframe; and (3) Address recent Corps changes to 1994 policy with respect to utility relocations on channel deepening or widening projects that was established in WRDA 1986.

4. Finally, it's imperative that any broad infrastructure investment legislation include maritime infrastructure. AAPA has identified \$66 billion in waterside and landside investments over the next decade that will help assure the benefits from an anticipated \$155 billion in port-related capital investments will be realized to grow the U.S. economy, increase family-wage supporting jobs, enhance America's international competitiveness and generate additional tax revenues.

I commend the Committee leadership for recognizing the nexus between water resources development and economic prosperity. I urge you to develop and pass a Water Resources Development Act at the earliest possible time. I'm happy to address any questions you have for me.

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