

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Science, and Related  
Agencies  
SD-142 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
c/o Amber Beck

The Honorable José Enrique Serrano  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Science, and Related  
Agencies  
H-310 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
c/o Robert Bonner

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Science, and Related  
Agencies  
SH-125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
c/o Jennifer Eskra

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Science, and Related  
Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
c/o Leslie Albright

Dear Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Shaheen, Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt,

RE: FY 2020 NOAA PORTS Program Funding

Ensuring that our nation's seaports safely and efficiently move freight is a critical priority for the economic health of this nation. Responsible for over a quarter of the United States GDP and nearly 31 million American jobs, a well-maintained port system is vital to the manufacturers, exporters and farmers who count on U.S. ports to move their products to market and provide critical goods for their supply chain. We urge you to support these essential federal programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Ocean Service as well as its marine weather forecasting capabilities, including the National Data Buoy Center of NOAA's National Weather Service. We also urge you to support operations and maintenance for NOAA's aging hydrographic fleet, as well as investments in new NOAA vessels, including new hydrographic vessels.

I write today in particular support of funding for NOAA's Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS). This program is a vital source of trusted real-time information available to mariners and pilots on specific channel conditions that enables safety and efficiency decisions to be made with confidence and keeps our seaports moving. The program has expanded over the past decade to 33 locations that serve over 75 of the nation's largest and most active ports. This expansion and additional services have been accomplished while receiving flat funding of \$5 million over the past decade.

AAPA requests PORTS funding be increased to \$15 million in FY 2020. The additional \$10 million would allow NOAA to reduce the maintenance backlog on existing equipment, modernize equipment to a consistent

current platform across the nation, and transition new services from development to full implementation. Examples include establishing PORTS at Kings Bay, GA, Coos Bay, OR, and Honolulu, HI, as well as implementing a Precision Navigation program on the Lower Mississippi River and New York/New Jersey. This increase would also resolve inconsistent funding of PORTS operations and maintenance across the nation, as presently some ports are funding these costs to varying degrees.

AAPA appreciated the additional \$1.5 million provided in the FY 2019 appropriation for the National Water Level Observation Network to recapitalize this critical navigation safety asset that underpins the PORTS program. We urge that this funding increase continues in FY 2020, as navigation safety is vital to the nation's economic health and security.

We appreciate your recognition of the critical importance of ports and their vital role in the U.S. transportation system and economy. Please let us know whenever AAPA and our member ports may be of any assistance.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt J. Nagle", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kurt J. Nagle  
President and CEO