

July 31, 2018

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wicker,

We greatly appreciate your leadership on the introduction of the Port Operations, Research, and Technology (PORT) Act, S. 3273. The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), the unified voice of the maritime industry is pleased to support this timely legislation.

As an industry, multimodal connectivity and rail access are top priorities for building out a 21<sup>st</sup> century freight network. In 2016, the FAST Act created a funded freight program, which included ports as eligible recipients. As a result, ports are now firmly embraced as part of the surface transportation network.

Equally important, the FAST Act required states to complete state freight plans to continue to receive their freight formula funding. The results have been telling. To date, 90 percent of the states have submitted multimodal state freight plans to the U.S. Department of Transportation. This is important because it signals that states recognize the value of multimodal projects, but also that our supply chain is becoming operational, and ports are at the center of this activity. Your legislation takes that needed next step in ensuring that first and last mile resources are available for stronger port landside and waterside connections.

To further expand on port connection needs, AAPA port members recently identified more than \$20 billion in projected multimodal port and rail access needs in the next decade in the *State of Freight III – Rail Access and Port Multimodal Funding Needs Report*. Further, a third of AAPA ports identified pressing rail project needs that cost more than \$50 million. In fact, rail access and first and last mile resources are so important to the port industry and supply chain that within the next ten years, 77 percent of ports are planning on-dock, near-dock or rail access projects. Your legislation speaks directly to the multimodal and connectivity needs of the port industry.

AAPA believes S. 3273 would also serve to leverage additional private sector resources, to ensure waterside and landside connections are built in consultation and result in more efficient port connectivity to the freight network.

Thank you again for your leadership on this critical issue. AAPA looks forward to working with you and your staff to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,



Kurt J. Nagle  
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable John Thune (R-SD), Chairman, Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee  
The Honorable Bill Nelson (D-FL), Ranking Member, Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee  
The Honorable Bill Shuster (R-PA), Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
The Honorable Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Ranking Member, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee