

October 22, 2013

Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable John A. Boehner  
H-232 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6501  
c/o Chief of Staff Mike Sommers  
cc: Policy Advisor Will Kinzel

Dear Speaker Boehner:

The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) is pleased to see that you have scheduled floor time for H.R.3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), and we urge you to encourage every Member of the House to move this important piece of legislation to conference with the Senate by voting “yes” on its passage. A water resources bill in 2013 is critical to the success of America, and crucial to our economic growth and job creation. The last water resources bill was signed into law six years ago, making this one long overdue. We thank you for your leadership in moving this legislation forward.

As the federal government looks to resolve its budget and deficit challenges, it is imperative to focus scarce federal resources in those areas that can have the greatest impact. American international trade accounts for more than one quarter of our Gross Domestic Product. More than 99 percent of our overseas trade moves through America’s seaports. Cargo moving through our seaports is responsible for more than 13 million American jobs and generates in excess of \$200 billion annually in federal, state, and local tax revenues.

This bill takes an important first step in addressing an issue of key concern to AAPA and our members: the collection and use of the federal Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT). Our U.S. Legislative Policy Council has adopted six guiding principles for this issue. The principles include guaranteeing full use of HMT annual revenues; ensuring that HMT revenues are first used for historically-intended purposes; providing more equity for HMT donors; assuring that U.S. tax policy does not disadvantage U.S. ports and maritime cargo; ensuring that there is a process to efficiently study and construct deep draft navigation projects; and modernizing the cost-share formula for dredging federal navigation channels. While a long-term solution must still be found for this faulty system, passage of the House WRRDA will allow House/Senate conferees to begin to make progress in improving this system. WRRDA also includes numerous reforms to help meet the maritime transportation needs of our nation today and in the future.

America's public ports and their private sector partners plan to invest more than \$46 billion in seaport infrastructure in the next five years. We need the federal government to uphold its end of the partnership by investing in America's transportation infrastructure on our three coasts and the Great Lakes. Maintaining America's link to the global marketplace by creating and maintaining modern and efficient seaport and waterway infrastructure will provide significant benefits to our nation's economic vitality, job growth, and international competitiveness, as well as create sizable tax revenues from cargo and trade activities.

AAPA applauds your commitment as Speaker to bring WRRDA to the floor for a vote. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that the House sends this bill to conference with the Senate by passing it as soon as possible. America needs our seaports to work as efficiently as possible and we need the House and Senate to pass water resources legislation this year to ensure that this happens.

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  
KJN/kp:ism

cc: Water Resources Staff Member for Each Representative in the U.S. House  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Staff: Beth Spivey, John Anderson,  
Geoff Bowman