



December 7, 2020

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Barrasso and DeFazio and Ranking Members Carper and Graves:

API supports the bipartisan Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020 that focuses on the commitment to the health of our nation's ports and waterways. We applaud your respective Committees for creating legislation that ensures needed investments are made to keep U.S. waterways operating safely, efficiently, and competitively in the global marketplace. We urge swift action by Congress to ensure this legislation moves to the President's desk and becomes law before the end of this year.

The U.S. maritime infrastructure system acts as a crucial link in the American economy. In 2016, the U.S. maritime transportation system—consisting of harbors, ports, channels, locks, dams and waterways—delivered \$2.0 trillion worth of goods with half of this volume involving foreign trade.¹ The U.S. coastal port and inland waterway system together support over 2.5 million jobs associated with the shipping industry.^{2,3} Yet, the U.S. maritime infrastructure system is in critical condition and will face increased pressures with international and domestic trade expected to continue increasing while global trade volume, shipping distances, and vessels expand to maximize cost efficiency. While the reliance on the maritime system grows, the existing infrastructure is aging with the average age of locks in the United States now exceeding 50 years. As a result of aging infrastructure and under investment in modernization, traffic delays, frequent congestion and added costs are common events for waterway users.

As a significant component of local, state, and national economies, the health of our maritime system is critical to our way of life. Ensuring a modern maritime infrastructure system that allows for the continued safe and reliable transport of the energy that American families and businesses use every day is integral to our country's economic recovery. API is grateful for your bipartisan leadership to improve our nation's waterway infrastructure, and we urge you to swiftly move this legislation into law.

¹ United States Army Corps of Engineers. Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center. CY 2016 Waterborne Tonnage by State. 2016

² PwC. Economic Contribution of the US Tugboat, Towboat, and Barge Industry. May 10, 2017

³ Martin Associates. 2018 National Economic Impact of the U.S. Coastal Port System. March 2019