

Statement of Congressman James Comer (KY-01)

**Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**

February 25, 2020

Chairman Nepalitano, Ranking Member Westerman, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I represent the 1st Congressional District of Kentucky, which is home to Paducah which serves as a major hub of the inland waterways system due to its strategic location at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee rivers. Kentucky's river industry alone moves around 100 million tons of cargo per year with a combined value of over \$10 billion. Our waterways provide a safe and efficient way to transport the commodities that America needs – from coal and petroleum, to chemicals and other hazardous materials, to grains and other agricultural products like those grown and used in my district.

Unfortunately, the majority of our waterways infrastructure is over fifty years old and we are beginning to pay the price. This includes levees needed for flood protection, locks and dams that support navigation and hydropower generation, and countless other projects necessary to transit the inland waterways system. These major infrastructure projects are strategic investments in the future of our nation's infrastructure, and Americans deserve consistent, stable federal funding in order to capitalize on our highly skilled workforce and foster further industrial development.

As Congress considers components of a WRDA reauthorization, I want to voice my support for conforming the cost-share for new construction and major rehabilitation projects on the inland waterways transportation system. I support adjusting the cost-share to 25% Inland Waterways Trust Fund and 75% general funds for Inland Waterways Trust Fund construction projects. This adjustment will allow the inland waterways construction portfolio of 23 projects to be completed in 20 years instead of the current expected completion of 40 years.

Additionally, I would like to express my support for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which is used by Riverports such as the Hickman-Fulton County Riverport Authority for vital dredging.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in Congress to provide resources for completion of these high-priority investments in our waterways infrastructure, and I appreciate the opportunity to relay these priorities to you today.