



**AMERICAN
GREAT LAKES PORTS
ASSOCIATION**

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2016 POLICY AGENDA

Harbor Maintenance Funding

The Harbor Maintenance Tax is a fee collected from users of the maritime transportation system in order to fund the Army Corps of Engineers' operation and maintenance activities. In the Great Lakes, these activities include regular dredging of harbors, maintenance of breakwaters, and operation of the Soo Locks. Despite the fact that adequate revenue is being collected (approximately \$1.6 billion annually), Congress has restricted spending on harbor maintenance due to budgetary constraints. The result is crumbling infrastructure and harbors choked with sand and silt. In the Great Lakes region there is a \$200 million dredging backlog. Breakwaters need \$250 million in repairs, and the Soo Locks require \$115.5 million in upgrades.

Congress should level-fund the Corps of Engineers' operation and maintenance activities (relative to FY2016) and include \$1.263 billion in the FY2017 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill.

Marine Infrastructure Renewal

Soo Lock Rehabilitation

Owned and operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, the lock complex at Sault Ste Marie, Michigan ("Soo Locks") enables ships to navigate the St. Marys River, which connects Lake Superior and Lake Huron. Through this critical infrastructure, Great Lakes commercial vessels carry iron ore and other raw materials that feed the nation's steel industry, agricultural products destined for export markets, and low sulfur coal fueling the region's electric utilities.

Unfortunately, the lock infrastructure is old and in need of repair and replacement. The two operating locks at Sault Ste Marie were constructed in 1948 and 1968. In 2007, the Corps of Engineers began a multi-year Asset Renewal Program to rehabilitate and modernize the Soo Locks' infrastructure at a total cost of \$105 million. The goal of this program is to improve the efficiency of lock operations and reduce the risk of lock failure and possible vessel delays.

The FY2017 budget provides \$5.9 million to rehabilitate Soo Lock infrastructure - a shortfall of \$8.25 million compared to the amount needed. Congress should provide adequate funds in the Fiscal Year 2017 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill to ensure continuation of the Soo Lock Asset Renewal Program.

Seaway Lock Rehabilitation

The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 authorized the Secretary of Transportation to spend up to \$134 million to repair and rehabilitate the Eisenhower and Snell Locks on the St. Lawrence River in upstate New York. In response, the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC) initiated a 10-year asset renewal program to rehabilitate the Seaway's lock infrastructure and other capital assets. Originally constructed in 1959, the Seaway connects the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean and provides Great Lakes states with access to world trade. Congress should approve the Administration's FY2017 budget request of \$36 million for the SLSDC, which includes \$17.4 million to continue the asset renewal program.

Great Lakes Breakwater Reconstruction

Throughout the Great Lakes region, commercial harbors and municipal waterfronts are protected from excessive wave action by breakwater structures. These structures are maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers. Due to inadequate budgetary resources, many of these structures have fallen into disrepair, threatening commercial navigation, recreational boating, and waterfront property. Congress should provide funds in the Fiscal Year 2017 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill (Army Corps of Engineers Operation and Maintenance Budget) for breakwater repair and rehabilitation, particularly in the following critical locations:

- Milwaukee, WI
- Chicago, IL
- Burns Harbor, IN
- Rochester, NY
- Oswego, NY
- Buffalo, NY
- Huron, OH
- Ludington, MI
- Muskegon, MI

Short Sea Shipping

Throughout the United States, road and rail congestion threaten the flow of commerce and economic growth. To address congestion, transportation planners are examining how local waterways can play an increased role in accommodating the movement of freight. The Great Lakes navigation system provides our region with a cost effective, waterborne transportation alternative. An impediment to the development of short-distance marine transportation services (short sea shipping) is the U.S. Harbor Maintenance Tax, which is only assessed on cargo if it moves by water.

Congress should enact legislation exempting the movement of non-bulk cargo from the U.S. Harbor Maintenance Tax as a means of encouraging the movement of freight from congested surface transportation systems to marine alternatives.

Aquatic Nuisance Species / Ballast Water Regulations

The problem of aquatic nuisance species has plagued the Great Lakes region for more than 20 years. There are a number of vectors by which non-native species enter the Great Lakes, including the ballast water of ocean-going vessels. In response to this problem, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and most every Great Lakes state have established ballast water discharge regulations. While these rules will help protect the Great Lakes, the regulatory landscape is chaotic and threatens to impede commerce with inconsistent rules. Congress should enact H.R. 980 / S. 373, legislation to create consistent national standards for the regulation of ships' ballast water and other vessel discharges and to establish clear and exclusive federal jurisdiction over ballast water regulation.

Chicago Area Waterway System

Constructed between 1887-1922, the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) provides a connection between the inland river navigation system and the Great Lakes, facilitating the movement of commercial maritime commerce and recreational boating. The waterway also serves an important role in the sanitation and flood control system serving Chicago and Northwest Indiana.

In an effort to control the migration of non-native Asian Carp and other aquatic nuisance species, some have proposed physical separation of the waterway. AGLPA opposes closure of navigable waterways in the Great Lakes region. Physical separation will result in the disruption of commerce to the Port of Milwaukee, Port of Burns Harbor, Port of Indiana Harbor, and Port of Chicago, with negative impact on thousands of jobs.

AGLPA supports efforts to prevent migration of non-native Asian Carp and other aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, while at the same time protecting the vital role of maritime commerce. AGLPA urges the federal government to continue to pursue a comprehensive approach to this problem, including: operation and maintenance of electronic barriers in the canal near Lockport, Illinois; monitoring and sampling of fish populations; studying chemical and biological controls; designing and deploying barriers along the 18 other pathways identified by the federal government; and coordination with the Government of Canada to police illegal transport of Asian Carp in the aquaculture industry.

Seaway Navigation Season

The opening and closing dates of the St. Lawrence Seaway vary from year to year due to weather conditions and the demands of commerce. The system's locks have opened as early as March 20 and as late as March 31. The closing date has ranged from December 24 to December 31. In an effort to enhance the reliability of the shipping system, attract new cargoes and foster employment in the maritime sector, the United States and Canada should harmonize the Seaway's opening and closing dates with those of the Soo Locks in northern Michigan. Doing so would establish a fixed navigation season for the entire Great Lakes navigation system from March 25th - January 15th.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The Great Lakes include 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater and host a diverse ecosystem of aquatic and terrestrial life. Launched in 2010, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was created to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem. The GLRI seeks to replace earlier piecemeal approaches to ecosystem restoration with a single comprehensive program. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leads and administers the restoration initiative and partners with multiple federal agencies to carry out restoration projects. These projects include several that benefit the maritime industry. For example, GLRI funding supports ongoing work at the Great Ships Initiative, the world's only fresh water ballast treatment technology test center. GLRI funds are also being used to implement beneficial reuse projects for dredge material disposal.

Since 2010, Congress has appropriated \$2.2 billion to support the program's initiatives throughout the Great Lakes region. The FY2017 budget request includes \$250 million, a \$50 million cut from last year's level. As stakeholders in a healthy, productive ecosystem, Great Lakes ports support the GLRI program and urge Congress to include \$300 million in the EPA's FY2017 budget.

State Assistance for Port Infrastructure

Great Lakes Seaway shipping supports 128,000 jobs in the eight Great Lakes states. This fact demonstrates that ports are important economic drivers. While our states invest heavily in highways, rail, airports and other transportation infrastructure, they largely ignore their ports. Of the eight Great Lakes states, only two (Minnesota & Wisconsin) have a state port assistance program. As a contrast, the State of Florida is investing heavily in ports as an economic development strategy. Between 2011-

2014, Florida invested \$642 million in port infrastructure. Illinois ports handle more waterborne commerce than Florida ports, yet the state has no focus on ports. With more than 20 federally authorized commercial harbors, and twice the shoreline of Florida, the State of Michigan largely ignores its ports and has failed to strategically leverage these assets to grow its economy. The same can be said for Ohio.

In late 2015, a regional maritime strategy released by the Conference of Great Lakes Governors and Premiers called for port investment by states. Great Lakes states should follow-up on that recommendation and enact harbor assistance programs similar to those in Wisconsin and Minnesota.