



**2019 Position Paper**

**Marine Infrastructure Investment**

**Summary:**

Throughout the Great Lakes region, federal navigation infrastructure is in need of reconstruction and repair. Critical infrastructure includes the Soo Lock complex in northern Michigan and the St. Lawrence Seaway locks in upstate New York. Additional investments are necessary to restore federal breakwater structures protecting harbors and urban waterfronts throughout the region.

**AGLPA Position:**

Congress should appropriate adequate resources to fund critical navigation infrastructure. The FY2020 budget of the Army Corps of Engineers only provides \$2.6 million to rehabilitate Soo Lock infrastructure - a shortfall of \$2.4 million compared to the amount needed. A total of \$12 million needs to be included in the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY2020 budget for the Seaway's Asset Renewal Program.

**Additional Background:**

**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 program to rehabilitate and modernize the Soo Locks' infrastructure. The goal of this program is to improve the efficiency of lock operations and reduce the risk of lock failure and possible vessel delays. While much has been accomplished since 2007, an additional \$75 million is needed to complete all work items. The Corps' FY20 budget includes \$2.6 million for the project - a shortfall of \$2.4 million compared to the amount needed this year.

## Seaway Lock Rehabilitation and Asset Renewal

Originally constructed in 1959, the Saint Lawrence Seaway connects the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean and provides Great Lakes states with access to world trade. The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 authorized the Secretary of Transportation to initiate an asset renewal program, which includes rehabilitation of the Eisenhower and Snell Locks on the St. Lawrence River in upstate New York. Between 2009-2014 the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC) completed 43 separate projects at a cost of \$94 million. These projects include maintenance dredging of the navigation channel, structural rehabilitation of lock infrastructure, repair of lock gates, and equipment replacement. Future plans call for 45 additional projects to be completed between 2016-2020 at a cost of approximately \$98.9 million. Although the Administration has budgeted \$8 million in the FY2020 budget for the Asset Renewal Program, the agency can deploy up to \$12 million this coming fiscal year. Congress should include the additional funds in the FY2020 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill. These investments will ensure the reliability of the waterway and the industries and communities it serves.

## 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. The approximate (current) cost to repair and reconstruct Great Lakes breakwaters is \$320 million. Breakwater investments are necessary in the following port communities.

- Chicago, IL
- Buffalo, NY
- Oswego, NY
- Cleveland, OH
- Muskegon, MI
- Two Harbors, MN
- Huron, OH
- Lorain, OH
- Milwaukee, WI

While the current Congressional earmark ban prohibits funds from being specifically appropriated to these local projects, Congress should provide a line item in the FY2020 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill for "additional funding for ongoing work," as it has in past years. These unassigned additional funds provide the Corps of Engineers with flexible money to address a variety of needs, including repair of navigation structures.