



## **2022 Position Paper**

# **FUND PORT INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS**

### **Summary:**

In 2010, Congress authorized a Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) to be administered by the U.S. Maritime Administration. While the program remained unfunded for many years, Congress provided first-year funds of \$293 million in the FY2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act. Congress continued program funding at \$225 million in FY2020; \$230 million in FY2021; and \$234 million in FY2022. On top of this funding baseline, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provides an additional \$2.25 billion for the program over the next five years.

In four short years, the PIDP program has become a critical source of federal assistance to reconstruct docks, improve road and rail access, expand storage capacity and modernized cargo handling equipment. To date, ten Great Lakes ports have received more than \$93 million for critical infrastructure investments.

### **AGLPA Position:**

Great Lakes ports strongly support continued funding for the Port Infrastructure Development Grant program and urge Congress to include \$750 million - the full authorized program level - in the FY2023 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill. Great Lakes ports also support a change of law to make cruise-related infrastructure eligible for up to 5 percent of annual program grants.

### **Additional Background:**

While the United States has federal grant programs for aviation, highway, rail and public transportation infrastructure, until recently there had not been a federal assistance program specifically targeted at port infrastructure. Ports are eligible to apply for U.S. Department of Transportation "RAISE" and "INFRA" grants, but often find themselves competing with other important airport, highway or mass transit priorities in their communities. For this reason, a dedicated port infrastructure grant program is attractive.

In 2010, Congress enacted legislation (P.L. 111-84) to create a Port Infrastructure Development Program within the U.S. Department of Transportation/Maritime Administration. The program's goal was to assist local port stakeholders as they work to improve the movement of freight. This assistance may include planning, project oversight, technical assistance, expediting environmental reviews, coordinating with other federal agencies, and issuing grants.

In 2019, Congress passed the Ports Improvement Act, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020. This legislation updated and enhanced the original 2010 program. The new authorization improves the program's focus, establishes non-federal cost share requirements, clarifies use of grant funds, ensures a fair distribution of grant awards, and authorizes a funding level of \$500 million in FY2021. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2021 increased the program's funding level to \$750 million for FY2022.

In its first three rounds of grant making (2019-2021) the Maritime Administration awarded PIDP grants to ten Great Lakes ports as follows:

2019

Duluth Seaway Port Authority:	\$10.5 million
Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority:	\$16 million
Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority:	\$11 million
Port Milwaukee:	\$15.89 million

2020

Ports of Indiana/Burns Harbor:	\$4 million
Port of Conneaut:	\$19.5 million

2021

Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority:	\$3 million
Marquette, Michigan:	\$1.6 million
Alpena, Michigan:	\$3.7 million
Superior, Wisconsin:	\$8.4 million

Great Lakes Total: \$93.3 million

**Cruise Infrastructure**

One of the most exciting developments in Great Lakes shipping is growth in our cruise sector. In recent years, cruise ship operators have discovered the beauty of the Great Lakes, the cultural resources in our major cities, and the charm of our small shoreline communities. While the pandemic has temporarily constrained cruise activity, we expect cruise tourism to expand considerably in coming years.

Because cruise activity is relatively new at Great Lakes ports, most harbors lack appropriate passenger infrastructure. It is not uncommon for Great Lakes cruise passengers to disembark at gritty industrial docks adjacent to piles of bulk and breakbulk cargo. Other ports lack adequate lighting, utilities or security systems. Many communities have struggled to find funding to address these infrastructure needs.

Current law limits PIDP grants to those projects that enhance the "movement of goods." For this reason, cruise and passenger facilities are currently ineligible. We ask that Congress modify the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) to make passenger facilities eligible for up to 5 percent of annual grant awards.