



2020 Position Paper

Marine Infrastructure Investment

Summary:

Throughout the Great Lakes region, federal navigation infrastructure is in need of maintenance, reconstruction and repair. Critical infrastructure includes the Soo Lock complex in northern Michigan, and breakwater and jetty structures protecting harbors and urban waterfronts throughout the region.

AGLPA Position:

Congress should appropriate adequate resources to fund third-year construction of the new large lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; repair and rehabilitation of the existing locks at the Soo; and maintenance of breakwater and jetty structures throughout the region.

Additional Background:

New Soo Lock

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 to the lower four Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. 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, lock infrastructure is old and in need of repair and replacement.

Congress originally authorized construction of a new large lock at Sault Ste Marie in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. The project was reauthorized in 2007 and again in 2018 at a total cost of \$922 million. The project is currently under construction with first-year funds provided in FY2019 and second year funds in FY2020. The Corps' FY2021 budget includes \$123.2 million for third-year construction of the new lock. While this is welcome and important support, the agency estimates that it could deploy up to \$173.2 million in construction funds during FY2021. Congress and the Administration should keep the project moving forward and provide third-year funding of \$173.2 million in the FY2021 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill and FY2021 work plan.

Repair of Existing Soo Locks

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 lock infrastructure. The goal of the Soo Lock Asset Renewal 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 \$73 million is needed to complete work. For the first time in many years, the Corps' FY21 budget includes no funds for Soo Lock Asset Renewal. Were funds to be made available, the Corps indicates that it could deploy up to \$34.27 million in the coming year.

Great Lakes Breakwater Reconstruction

Throughout the Great Lakes region, commercial harbors and municipal waterfronts are protected from excessive wave action by breakwater and jetty 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 current cost estimate to repair and reconstruct Great Lakes breakwaters and jetties is \$300 million. Investments are particularly necessary in the following locations.

- Chicago, IL
- Oswego, NY
- Cleveland, OH

While the current Congressional earmark ban prohibits funds from being specifically appropriated to these local projects, Congress should provide funds in the FY2021 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.