



April 7, 2021

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress  
2186 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Kaptur:

The American Great Lakes Ports Association (AGLPA) represents the interests of commercial ports and port users on the United States side of the Great Lakes. Our regional maritime industry supports more than 147,000 American jobs in the eight Great Lakes states and generates more than \$25 billion in economic activity.

Last week President Biden released his infrastructure investment plan, which among other things called for a \$17 billion investment in ports and waterway infrastructure. As Congress considers this proposal, we urge you to consider investments in Great Lakes navigation infrastructure. Each of the following recommendations will not only create jobs in the short term, but also represent a prudent investment in the economic health of the Great Lakes region.

### **Great Lakes Navigation System 2021 Infrastructure Investment Needs**

#### **1. Repair and modernize port and dock infrastructure**

Throughout the Great Lakes region, port and dock infrastructure is in need of repair, modernization and expansion. The Maritime Administration's new Port Infrastructure Development Program provides federal assistance to improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of the movement of goods through the nation's seaports. Since it was launched in FY2019, the program has awarded more than \$76 million to Great Lakes ports for infrastructure enhancement; however, there is much more work that needs to be done. Congress reauthorized the program in 2020 and increased its size to \$750 million annually.

Total recommended nationwide = \$750 million/year - U.S. Department of Transportation /  
Maritime Administration

## **2. Construct a new Great Lakes icebreaker**

Heavy ice threatens the reliability of Great Lakes-Seaway transportation early and late in the navigation season. Severe winter ice not only delays shipping, but can be a hazard to the safety of vessels and their crew. In 1979, the U.S. and Canadian governments had a total of 20 icebreaking vessels serving the Great Lakes. Today, only 11 vessels providing icebreaking service. In 2015 Congress authorized construction of a new heavy icebreaker on the Great Lakes. The project's estimated cost is \$350 million.

Total estimated need = \$350 million - U.S. Coast Guard / Procurement, Construction and Improvements

## **3. Complete construction of the 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. Originally authorized by Congress in 1986, the Army Corps of Engineers has initiated construction of a new large lock at the Soo. To date, the project has received \$411 million in appropriations for construction. At this time, the Corps estimates that an additional \$960 million will be needed to complete the project.

Total estimated need = \$960 million - Army Corps of Engineers / Construction

## **4. Repair the existing Soo Locks**

The two operating locks at Sault Ste Marie were constructed in 1948 and 1968. Unfortunately, the infrastructure is old and in need of repair. In 2007, the Corps of Engineers began a multi-year program to rehabilitate and modernize the lock infrastructure. To date, more than \$160 million has been appropriated. At this time, the agency estimates that an additional \$225 million is needed over the next five years.

Total estimated need = \$225 million - Army Corps of Engineers / Operation and Maintenance

## **5. Eliminate the regional dredging backlog**

The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintenance dredging of navigation channels in the nation's ports and waterways. Over the last two decades Congress has restricted appropriations for harbor maintenance due to budgetary constraints. The result is navigation channels and harbors choked with sand and silt. The Corps of Engineers estimates that \$375 million will be needed to address the dredging backlog in the Great Lakes region and restore navigation channels to authorized dimensions.

Total estimated need = \$375 million - Army Corps of Engineers / Operation and Maintenance

## 6. Repair and rehabilitate Great Lakes navigation structures

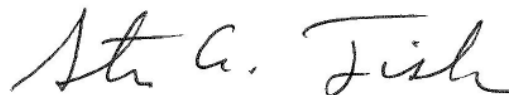
Commercial harbors and municipal waterfronts are protected from excessive wave action by breakwater and jetty structures, which are maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers. Due to inadequate funding, many of these structures have fallen into disrepair, threatening commercial navigation, recreational boating, and waterfront property. Recent high-water levels and severe weather events have crippled these structures further. The Corps of Engineers estimates that repair and rehabilitation of Great Lakes breakwaters and jetties will cost \$320 million.

Total estimated need = \$320 million - Army Corps of Engineers / Operation and Maintenance

The amounts cited above for each program represent the total estimated need, and may require several fiscal years to be deployed. Estimates have been provided by the government agency overseeing each program. These investments are all ongoing projects and programs. They have been authorized by Congress, and Members of the Great Lakes Congressional delegation have championed past funding for each of them. In this regard, we believe they represent prudent and responsible options for infrastructure investment.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve A. Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven A. Fisher  
Executive Director