



2024 Position Paper

DISTRIBUTE PORT INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS EQUITABLY

Summary:

The Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) is the primary source of federal investment in the nation's port infrastructure, such as dock reconstruction, rail improvements, road access, storage expansion, and modernization of cargo handling equipment. The program is managed by the Maritime Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Port infrastructure grants are not being distributed equitably. Last year, the U.S. Department of Transportation distributed \$653 million under the program and Great Lakes ports only received 2% of the funds. Over the 5-year life of the program, Great Lakes ports have received only 8% of funds distributed. By comparison, West Coast ports have received 38.5% and East Coast ports 34%.

AGLPA Position:

Great Lakes ports support continued annual funding for the Port Infrastructure Development program and urge Congress to include \$300 million in the FY2025 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill.

Congress should amend the program's statute and require that funds be distributed in an equitable manner between regions of the United States.

Additional Background:

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 funding at \$293 million in the FY2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act. In subsequent years, annual appropriations have varied from \$120 million to \$234 million. On top of this funding baseline, between FY2022-26 the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provides advanced appropriations of \$2.25 billion for the program or roughly \$450 million/year.

In six 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, thirteen Great Lakes ports have received \$168.91 million for critical infrastructure investments.

In its first five rounds of grant making (2019-2023) 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

2022

Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority:	\$27.2 million
Port of Green Bay:	\$10.1 million
Port of Monroe:	\$11.1 million
Detroit-Wayne County Port Authority:	\$16 million

2023

Port Milwaukee:	\$9.27 million
Ogdensburg Bridge & Port Authority	\$5.1 million
Great Lakes Total:	\$168.91 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.

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. Some 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.