AMERICAN
GREAT LAKES PORTS
ASSOCIATION

2026 Position Paper

FUND AND 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, including dock reconstruction, rail improvements, road access, storage expansion, and modernization of cargo handling equipment. The program is administered by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

This year, PIDP faces a significant funding cliff after FY2026, when advance appropriations provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) expire. Absent congressional action, total program funding would decline sharply beginning in FY2027.

Additionally, disparities in the geographic distribution of PIDP awards have persisted in the recent past. Three years ago, the U.S. Department of Transportation distributed approximately $653 million under the program, with Great Lakes ports receiving roughly two percent of the total funding. Two years ago, Great Lakes ports received $77.3 million, or approximately 13 percent of the total awards. Last year's (FY2025) PIDP awards remain pending.

AGLPA Position:

Great Lakes ports support continued annual funding for the Port Infrastructure Development Program and urge Congress to include no less than $550 million in annual discretionary funding for PIDP in future Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bills, consistent with the President's most recent (FY2026) budget request for the annual appropriations cycle. In line with the President's budget request, AGLPA also strongly supports the additional $450 million in advance appropriations for PIDP provided under IIJA, for a total of $1 billion in funding.

Ports are a foundation of the region's economy. Renewing port infrastructure is critical to sustaining jobs, supporting domestic manufacturing, and facilitating efficient trade. The PIDP program provides essential funding to help address these needs. Congress and the Administration should work to ensure the continued and timely flow of funds, particularly to ports that have already been awarded grants.

Additionally, AGLPA supports amending the program's statute to require that PIDP funds be distributed in a more equitable manner among regions of the United States. Accordingly, we strongly endorse H.R. 6866 (Joyce) / S. 1238 (Peters), the Securing Smart Investments in our Ports Act. This bill directs the Department of Transportation to consider geographic distribution when selecting projects for PIDP awards.

Additional Background:

Congress authorized the Port Infrastructure Development Program in 2010 to be administered by the U.S. Maritime Administration. While the program remained unfunded for several years, Congress provided first-year funding of $293 million in the FY2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

In subsequent years, annual discretionary appropriations have varied significantly. The enacted annual discretionary appropriation for PIDP was $50 million in FY2025 and $103.3 million in FY2026.

In addition to annual appropriations, IIJA provided $2.25 billion in advance appropriations for PIDP over FY2022 through FY2026, equal to roughly $450 million per year. These advance appropriations expire after FY2026.

As a result, while total PIDP resources remain relatively robust through FY2026, the program faces a significant funding cliff beginning in FY2027. Absent congressional action, PIDP funding after FY2026 would be limited to annual discretionary appropriations alone, representing a sharp reduction from IIJA-era funding levels.

The President's FY2026 budget request reflected continued Administration support for PIDP, proposing total program resources of approximately $1 billion when combining annual discretionary funding with IIJA advance appropriations. Congress did not adopt the full level of the President's requested annual appropriation, but the request underscores continued support for sustained investment in port infrastructure.

The upcoming surface transportation reauthorization, which expires September 30, 2026, represents a potential legislative vehicle to address the expiration of IIJA advance appropriations and provide longer-term funding stability for PIDP.

Awards for Great Lakes Ports:

<u>2019</u>

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

<u>2020</u>

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

2024

Illinois International Port District – Port of Chicago:	$34.5 million
Chippewa County, Michigan:	$10.2 million
Port of Oswego Authority:	$11.3 million
Put-In-Bay, Ohio:	$10.4 million
Erie Western PA Port Authority:	$11.3 million
Great Lakes Total:	*$246.57 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 PIDP to make passenger facilities eligible for up to five percent of annual grant awards.