

Waterways Council, Inc.
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September 24, 2013

The Honorable Dave Camp
Chairman
House Ways & Means Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member
House Ways & Means Committee
110 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Camp and Ranking Member Levin:

Now that the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee has acted on a Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), there is an urgent need for the revenue committees to act to increase the user fee for modernizing our nation's inland waterways.

The undersigned organizations strongly support an increase in the user fee that barge and towing companies pay into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund.

This user fee – currently 20-cents-per-gallon of fuel used while operating on the inland system — should be increased to 26- to 29-cents-per-gallon. This amount is matched by General Treasury Funds and is dedicated to new construction and major rehabilitation of the inland system. This user fee increase is supported by those who pay it – just 300 commercial operators – while the entire nation benefits, from hydropower, municipal water supply, recreational boating and fishing, flood control, national security, and waterfront property development.

The inland waterways provide the most cost-competitive transportation option for our bulk commodities used in America and exported to marketplaces worldwide. The facts are clear:

- ◆ 60% of the nation's export-bound grain is transported on the inland waterways.
- ◆ An effective and efficient water transport system is essential to supply American farmers with fertilizer for Spring and Fall planting seasons.
- ◆ Farmers depend on our waterways' infrastructure to compete and win against producers outside the USA.
- ◆ The soon to be completed Panama Canal expansion will create opportunities for increased American trade, but not if our channels are not dredged and our locks and dams are not functioning.
- ◆ American family-wage jobs depend on operational ports and inland waterways.
- ◆ The waterways are vital to our manufacturing sectors and to the construction industry.
- ◆ American consumers benefit from transportation cost-savings made possible by the inland waterways; for every \$1 invested in our inland waterways, \$10 is returned in national benefits.

Most of America's locks and dams were built in the 1920s and 1930s, yet are used to transport 21st century cargoes that fuel our modern economy. This critical component of the transportation supply chain needs reinvestment and recapitalization, and a WRRDA bill that joins industry supported project delivery reforms with an industry sought increase in the user fee it pays is fiscally responsible.

We hope that the Members of the House Ways & Means Committee support inclusion of a user fee increase in the WRRDA bill that passes the House.

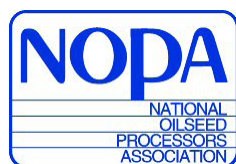
Sincerely,



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



WATERWAYS
COUNCIL, INC.





National Organizations: Agricultural Retailers Association • American Farm Bureau Federation • American Soybean Association • American Waterways Operators • Associated General Contractors of America • Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO • Carpenters' District Council of St. Louis & Vicinity • The Fertilizer Institute • GROWMARK, Inc. • International Union of Operating Engineers • National Association of Manufacturers • National Association of Wheat Growers • National Barley Growers Association • National Corn Growers Association • National Council of Farmer Cooperatives • National Grain & Feed Association • National Oilseed Processors Association • The United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters • United Brotherhood of Carpenters • US Canola Association • US Chamber of Commerce • US Dry Bean Council • Waterways Council, Inc.

State Organizations: Alabama Soybean and Corn Association • Colorado Corn Growers Association • Corn Producers Association of Texas • Illinois Corn Growers Association • Illinois Farm Bureau • Indiana Corn Growers Association • Indiana Soybean Alliance • Iowa Corn Growers Association • Kentucky Corn Growers Association • Missouri Corn Growers Association • Nebraska Corn Board • Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association • Ohio Soybean Association • Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

City/County Organizations: Greater New Orleans, Inc. • Adams County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Brown County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Calhoun County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Cass County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Christian County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Cook County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Crawford County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Cumberland County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Ford-Iroquois County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Hancock County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Henry County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Jackson County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Kankakee County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Knox County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • LaSalle County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Lawrence County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Lee County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Livingston County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Marshall-Putnam County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Mason County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Massac County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • McHenry County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • McLean County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Menard County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Mercer County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Monroe County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Morgan County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Moultrie County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Peoria County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Pike County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Pulaski-Alexander County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Richland County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Rock Island County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Sangamon County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Scott County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • St. Clair County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Union County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Vermilion County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Wayne County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • White County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Will County (Illinois) Farm Bureau • Winnebago-Boone County (Illinois) Farm Bureau

cc: Members of the House Ways & Means Committee