

December 9, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

The farmers, ranchers, food and beverage manufacturers, processors, package suppliers and agricultural product marketers that comprise our memberships are dedicated to providing the safe, abundant and affordable food, fiber and feed required to ensure our country stays healthy and fed.

We appreciate the fact that since the 113th Congress, the House and Senate have demonstrated a bipartisan commitment to evaluating and ultimately improving U.S. waterways infrastructure policy. This winning streak of policy progress should continue with the enactment of S. 1811, the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA 2020) before the end of this Congress.

There are two provisions of WRDA 2020 that our groups would like to highlight. First, we strongly support Section 109 of WRDA 2020 which will help bring the U.S. inland waterways transportation system into the 21st Century. As you know, the majority of U.S. locks and dams have outlived their 50-year design life. Most are not of sufficient capacity to handle modern 1,200-foot barge tows, while others are requiring more maintenance, which costs shippers valuable time and resources. Section 109 will bolster the U.S. inland waterways transportation system for the next ten years by amending the cost-share formula for the construction and major rehabilitation of inland waterways navigation projects from the 50:50 percent general revenue: Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) funding to 65 percent general revenue and 35 percent IWTF.

Second, our groups also support Section 101 of WRDA 2020 which will better ensure that funds collected and deposited in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) go towards their intended purpose of dredging the nation's ports and harbors. The fact that nearly \$10 billion has been collected and deposited in the HMTF but gone unspent towards investing in U.S. ports and harbors is a fiscal disservice to those that pay the 0.125 percent ad valorem tax based on the value of cargo imports. The inability thus far to access and spend those dollars on much-needed dredging further has eroded the United States' comparative transportation advantage and contributed to lost export opportunities to the detriment of U.S. economic growth. Thankfully,

Section 101 of WRDA 2020 helps unlock additional funds for critically needed harbor maintenance.

Because American agriculture's competitive advantage largely depends upon the quality, reliability, accessibility and cost-effectiveness of the national transportation system, our organizations strongly support WRDA 2020 and urge Congress to approve and enact this substantial infrastructure bill before the end of this Congress.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Sugar Alliance
American Soybean Association
Corn Refiners Association
Farm Credit Council
Growth Energy
National Aquaculture Association
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
North American Millers' Association
Soy Transportation Coalition
The Fertilizer Institute
United Fresh Produce Association
USA Rice