

May 1, 2017

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
United States House of Representatives  
2134 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Kelly  
United States House of Representatives  
1707 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Washington Office  
101 Constitution Ave., N.W.  
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Dear Ranking Member DeFazio and Representative Kelly:

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) supports H.R. 1908 - Investing In America: Unlocking the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act to increase investment in critical port projects and guarantee that money intended to dredge the nation's ports actually go towards harbor maintenance.

In March, ASCE released its *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* which graded our nation's ports a "C+." The U.S.' 926 ports are essential to the nation's competitiveness. They are responsible for \$4.6 trillion in economic activity—roughly 26% of the U.S. economy. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, full navigation channels at our nation's busiest 59 ports are available less than 35% of the time. Furthermore, few U.S. ports have the deeper navigation channels required to receive larger, "Post Panamax" ships.

H.R. 1908 would enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge all federal commercial harbors to their constructed widths and depths and would use only funds collected for this purpose. The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund currently has a balance of approximately \$9 billion. This money should be used for its stated purpose—to maintain and improve the nation's harbor infrastructure. ASCE has long supported putting the "trust" back in infrastructure "trust funds" and ensuring that user fees are only spent on the purpose for which they were collected.

Sincerely,



Brian Pallasch  
Managing Director, Government Relations & Infrastructure Initiatives