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May 3, 2019

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman, Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member, Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Water
Resources and Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Water Resources and Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
209 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Kelly
U.S. House of Representatives
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, Chairwoman Napolitano, Ranking Member Westerman, and Representative Kelly:

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) expresses our support for H.R. 2440, the Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act, a bill that provides \$34 billion over the next ten years for dredging at our nation's ports and ensures that all Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) revenues are used only for its intended purpose. This legislation appropriates the existing \$9.3 billion balance currently sitting in the HMTF and provides for full expenditure of the next decade's expected \$24.5 billion in new HMTF revenue for ports infrastructure investment.

Our nation's 926 ports support over 23.1 million jobs, provide \$321.1 billion in tax revenue to federal, state, and local governments, and are responsible for \$4.6 trillion in economic activity, or roughly 26 percent of the nation's economy – making them essential to U.S. competitiveness. Our ports serve as the gateway through which 99 percent of America's overseas trade passes. In addition, the top 10 U.S. ports accounted for 78 percent of U.S.

foreign waterborne trade in 2015. However, the investment gap for inland waterways systems and ports is expected to be \$1.5 billion by 2025, and ASCE's *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* gave our nation's ports a grade of "C+."

In a 2015 survey of ports, one-third indicated that congestion over the past ten years resulted in a 25 percent decrease in port productivity. Few of our nation's ports can accommodate the large ships that pass through the Panama Canal. To remain competitive in the global market and to accommodate these larger vessels, ports have been investing in their facilities and plan to spend over \$154 billion from 2016 to 2020 on expansion, modernization, and repair. However, ports are contending with larger container ships and do not always have adequate access to the HMTF, which would help these facilities prepare for larger vessels.

Despite the significant dredging needs at most U.S. ports, the fund's revenues are frequently not appropriated for its designated purpose; they are instead being used for federal deficit offsets. ASCE strongly supported the provision in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014 that created a phased-in approach to reach full use of HMTF revenues by FY2025 and that set incremental spending targets each year until full use.

ASCE thanks you for your leadership and introduction of H.R. 2440, the Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act. This legislation prioritizes the investment needs our nation's ports infrastructure, protects our nation's economy and millions of jobs, and ensures the U.S. remains globally competitive. We welcome the opportunity to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin A. Kemper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robin A. Kemper, P.E., LEED AP, F.SEI, F.ASCE
2019 ASCE President