May 1, 2018

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee  
2251 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Ranking Member  
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee  
2164 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Garret Graves  
Chairman  
House Water Resources & Environment Subcommittee  
2251 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano  
Ranking Member  
House Water Resources & Environment Subcommittee  
2164 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shuster and Graves, and Ranking Members DeFazio and Napolitano:

America’s inland waterways transportation system is comprised of 12,000 miles of navigable waterways in 38 states. This year alone, this system will move more than 550 million tons of freight valued at $300 billion over what is, mile-for-mile, the most fuel efficient, safest, and environmentally responsible mode of transporting goods. Historically, the U.S. has always recognized the vital contribution that waterborne transportation makes to America’s overall economic prosperity. Public expenditures to maintain navigation channels and build related infrastructure were among the nation’s earliest investments, and similar investments are just as critical to an efficient 21st century freight system.

Unfortunately, investment in our inland system has been inadequate for too long, and the condition of the nation’s locks and dams is deteriorating. A portfolio of 25 modernization projects valued at $8.8 billion has been authorized by Congress to be built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These projects are to be constructed through an existing public-private partnership between the Corps and those who commercially use the locks and dams. While numerous beneficiaries benefit from the nation’s inland waterways system, commercial barge operators are the only direct contributors to the Inland Waterways Trust Fund through their payment of a 29-cent-per-gallon diesel fuel tax. Typically, the trust fund provides 50% of construction funding, while the remaining 50% comes from General Treasury funds.

Hydropower is one of the many beneficiaries of the nation’s inland waterways transportation system. In fact, hydropower’s energy production would not even exist without the lock and dam infrastructure. According to the Corps of Engineers, hydropower facilities produce 3% of total U.S. electricity capacity through 75 hydropower projects in operation with 356 generating units. The annual gross estimated revenue generated from these facilities is approximately $5 billion, with an estimated $1.5 billion in net income paid each year to the U.S. Treasury from power sales at Corps dams, while the remaining $3.5 billion funds the administration and expenses of the Power Marketing Administration, and is used to the operation and maintenance of hydropower facilities.
We respectfully request language in the Water Resources Development Act of 2018 that requires a portion of the net hydropower revenues generated at Corps of Engineers dam projects be deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund to enable the Inland Waterways Trust fund to sustain an annual appropriations of at least $400 million per year for capital improvements at navigation dams.

Sincerely,

Bob Ditt
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

James Comer
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Bennie Thompson
Member of Congress

Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress

Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Bobby Rush
Member of Congress

Robin Kelly
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Bennie Thompson
Member of Congress
Lynn Jenkins, CPA
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper
Member of Congress

Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress

Todd Rokita
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

Mo Brooks
Member of Congress

Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Bradley Byrne
Member of Congress

Jason Lewis
Member of Congress

Keith Rothfus
Member of Congress

Brian Babin, D.D.S
Member of Congress

John Shimkus
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
Member of Congress

Mike D. Rogers
Member of Congress
Robert Aderholt
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Trent Kelly
Member of Congress

Randy Weber
Member of Congress

Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress