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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303

January 29, 2016

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
Department of Defense
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick
Commanding General & Chief of Engineers
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G St., NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Brig. Gen. C. David Turner, Commander
Army Corps of Engineers, South Atlantic
60 Forsythe St., SW
Atlanta, GA 30303-8801

Colonel Kevin P. Landers, Commander
Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington
69 Darlington Ave.
Wilmington, NC 28403

Dear Asst. Sec. Darcy, Lt. Gen. Bostick, Brig. Gen. Turner, and Col. Landers:

I am writing to request that you direct unallocated fiscal year 2016 funding to two maintenance dredging projects in Dare County, North Carolina – Oregon Inlet (Manteo – Shallowbag Bay) and Hatteras Inlet (Rollinson Channel).

Our offices have discussed these projects at length on countless occasions. I know you are aware of the chronically poor navigation conditions at both inlets. While I am grateful these projects were included in the President's fiscal year 2016 budget request, the amounts provided – \$2,000,000 for Oregon Inlet and \$300,000 for Hatteras Inlet – are insufficient to keep the channels maintained at anything close to their authorized depth. In fact, without supplemental funds, it is virtually guaranteed that both channels will close to vessel traffic during the year.

As you know, due to the ban on congressional earmarks, North Carolina's senators and I have no ability to add money to these specific projects through the legislative process. However, to address situations such as these, Congress added to the Corps' Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bill several unallocated pots of money for different project categories. For example, \$23.529 million was added for "Navigation Maintenance," and \$48 million was added for "Small, Remote, or Subsistence Navigation." Oregon Inlet and Hatteras Inlet should be eligible for funding from either of these pots.

Congress also directed the Corps to consider several criteria when deciding which projects to fund from these pots. Both projects should rank highly based on those criteria. In particular, I would point out that the Coast Guard depends on access through these two inlets to execute their search and rescue, law enforcement and national security functions for hundreds of miles off the North Carolina coast. I would also emphasize that these two inlets are critical pieces of the economy in Dare and Hyde County, North Carolina.

I believe Oregon Inlet and Hatteras Inlet are exactly the type of projects that Congress had in mind when it provided the Corps with these additional pots of fiscal year 2016 funding. I urge you to give them all due consideration.

If I can answer any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing your response. As always, thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Walter B. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress