

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2015

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Headquarters, US Army Corps of Engineers
441 G. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Secretary Darcy:

As a follow up to the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment's hearing on the one year anniversary of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, in which you testified, we are writing to ask that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) promptly carry out the Section 2008 Assessment of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

The Atlantic and Gulf Intracoastal Waterways is a 2,500+ mile inland waterway system that runs from Virginia to Texas. The AIWW/GIWW system is a method of transportation for both recreational and commercial vessels, including barges hauling petroleum, building materials, food and manufactured goods. The system serves the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center for Homeland Security, numerous military bases and equipment, commercial and charter fishing vessels, cruise and tour boats, and recreational boaters.

Considering that maintenance dredging of the AIWW/GIWW has been underfunded for several years, Congress authorized the Section 2008 Assessment so that USACE could gauge the operation and maintenance needs of the AIWW/GIWW as used for, among other things, commercial navigation, commercial fishing, recreation purposes, and purposes related to domestic energy production. The intent is that the Assessment would then be utilized by the USACE and Congress to identify the unmet operation and maintenance funds needed for this important waterway system.

As an example, the Florida Inland Navigation District has conducted its own economic studies, which have concluded that the AIWW in Florida annually transports over 500,000 recreational vessels; provides \$12 billion in economic output, which includes \$3 billion in personal wages and 66,631 jobs; generates \$540 million in tax revenues and increases property values by \$19.4 billion. Studies have shown that these benefits would be reduced by 45% to 50% if the waterway is not properly maintained.

However, the FIND study only reflects the AIWW along the east coast of Florida. The AIWW and GIWW have been deemed Marine Highways by the U.S Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration. The classification of the AIWW as M-95 and the GIWW as M-10

clearly demonstrate the value in taking a systems approach for maintaining marine transportation in these areas. One example of the value of M-95 is in regard to national defense with the movement of military jet fuel from Florida to South Carolina. With the post-Panamax expansion of ports along the eastern seaboard, the AIWW has the opportunity to serve as the marine highway backbone to more users with the ports serving as exits along M-95.

As reflected in Sec. 2008 of WRRDA, Congress intended that the USACE undertake a comprehensive assessment of the entire AIWW/GIWW system, so that the USACE and Congress can provide funding that more accurately reflects the needs. In addition, this study would allow non-federal, governmental partners to understand the needs in their area. As shown in Florida, North Carolina and most recently Charleston County, South Carolina, users of the waterway are aware of its value and have shown themselves to be willing to be a cost-sharing partner when needs are identified. Non-federal partners cannot maintain the entire federal waterway on their own, but they have been willing to participate in the process.

The Sec. 2008 Assessment is of great importance to us and we would appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. Thank you for your careful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



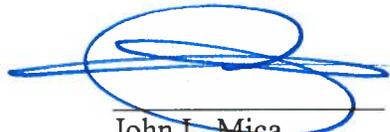
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Member of Congress



David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
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John L. Mica
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



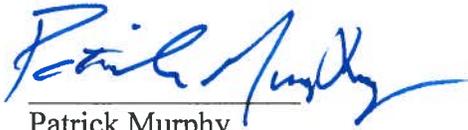
Ander Crenshaw
Member of Congress



Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress



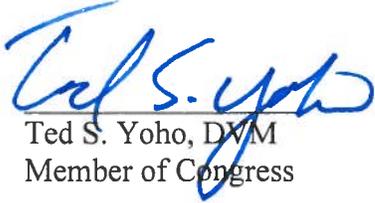
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Member of Congress



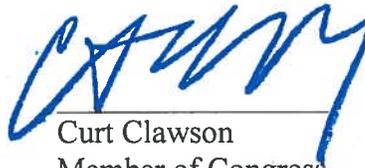
Patrick Murphy
Member of Congress



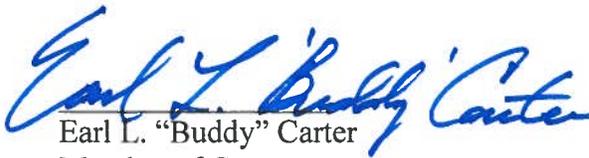
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