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1ST DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

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April 13, 2018

Mr. R. D. James  
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite, U.S. Army  
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers  
Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Mr. James and Lt. Gen. Semonite,

We write to you today to request the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) dedicate a portion of Congressionally-added construction funding to advance the engineering design work for, and the construction of, the project to build a second "Poe-sized" lock at the Soo Lock complex in Sault Ste. Marie, MI.

As you already know, an unexpected outage of the Poe Lock would be disastrous to the U.S and global economy. However, as the single point of failure in a trillion-dollar supply chain, the Soo Locks have a strong national security component as well. In March, Assistant Secretary James testified before the House Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee and noted that the project "is a priority" and the dependence on the Poe Lock, without any redundancy, to transport 95 percent of the nation's iron ore is "a very dangerous situation for national security." That same week, Lt. Gen. Semonite also testified before the House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee and noted the national security value of the Soo Lock project.

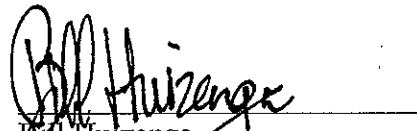
Prioritizing the modernization of the Soo Locks means prioritizing our military needs. As an example, ArcelorMittal USA's Burns Harbor, IN steel mill produces steel plate for military applications and depends on Minnesota iron ore, which is shipped through the Soo Locks. This company is the primary supplier of steel plate and Navy armor plate to U.S. naval shipbuilders and has supplied steel plate to virtually every submarine in the Navy's existing fleet and has long been the sole qualified U.S. supplier of these grades of steel to the Navy. It's plate products also find application in many fighting vehicles used by the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps, including the Abrams M1 main battle tank, the Bradley fighting vehicle, M88 recovery vehicles, the Stryker family of fighting vehicles, various Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and the up-armored Humvee. Providing redundancy to this iron ore transportation system must be a top priority of the USACE.

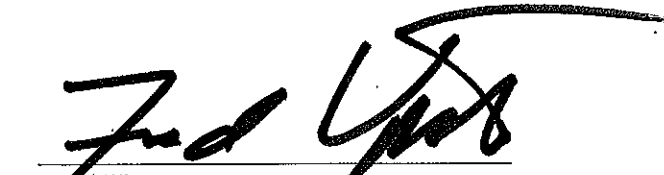
The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 provided the USACE with more than \$337 million in additional funding above the President's request for construction of navigation projects. As the Soo Lock project is already authorized by Congress, we urge the USACE to expend a portion of these additional funds in the FY18 workplan to complete the engineering design work for, and resume the construction of, this project. We also encourage the USACE to prioritize the Soo Locks project in its FY20 coastal and deep draft navigation budget request due to its significant economic and national security implications. Every additional year that our Great Lakes steel mills depend on the nearly 50-year old Poe Lock as their sole iron ore transportation gateway risks the production of vitally needed military weapons systems. The Soo Lock project cannot be delayed any longer for the sake of our military and economic supply chains.


Thank you for your prompt attention to this most important matter.


Sincerely,

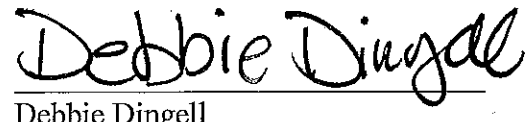
  
Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress


  
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Fred Upton  
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Paul Mitchell  
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John Moolenaar  
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Brenda Lawrence  
Member of Congress



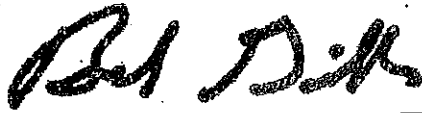
Sean Duffy  
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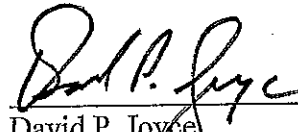
Richard M. Nolan  
Member of Congress



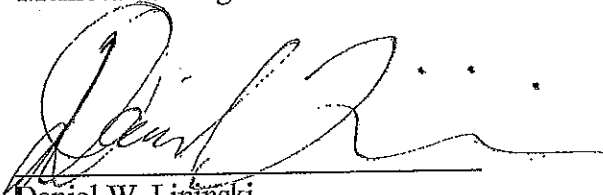
Dan Kildee  
Member of Congress



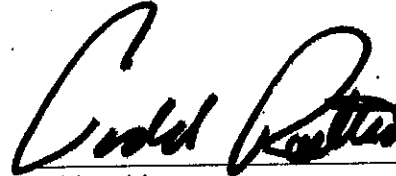
Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



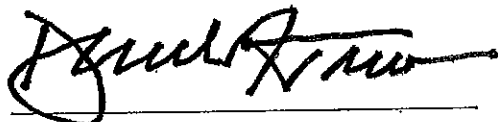
David P. Joyce  
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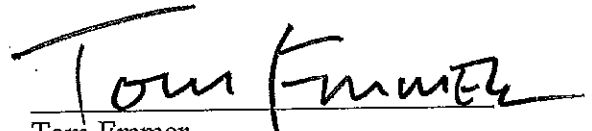
Daniel W. Lipinski  
Member of Congress



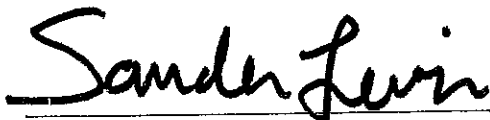
Todd Rokita  
Member of Congress



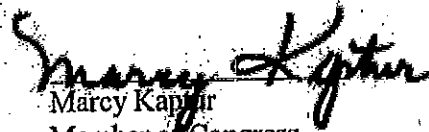
Dave Trott  
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Tom Emmer  
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Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur  
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