



March 25, 2019

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
House Transportation & Infrastructure
Committee
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
House Transportation & Infrastructure
Committee
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

Inland Rivers Ports & Terminals Association, Inc. (IRPT) writes to request that our transportation friends of Congress seriously consider and **Inland Port and Terminal Grant Program**.

Maintaining the inland rivers ports and terminals, to a sustainable system of reliability and performance in that commercial vessel operators can, cost-effectively and environmentally, transport bulk commodities, such as coal, petroleum, chemicals and grain is a key challenge within the context of competing federal priorities and limited resources. Our Nation's backbone, its ability to survive and compete globally heavily depends on America's ports and terminals. The many ports and terminals that carry our great nation's freight kindly request your immediate attention. **Failure to address these challenges, rehabilitation and maintenance and operational needs have and will continue to lead to supply-chain disruptions and negatively impact the nation's competitiveness in the global market.**

Should the nation's port and terminal facilities fail to meet infrastructure investments assisted by federal funding opportunities, the waterborne cargo diversion that would take place would cause truck traffic to nearly double, two inches of asphalt would be needed to increase the pavement thickness to 126,000 lane-miles to intercity Interstate systems. **Increased truck traffic significantly increases fuel consumption and emissions and increases maintenance costs on surface transportation.**

Inland Rivers Ports & Terminals, Inc. (IRPT): is a non-profit trade association with nearly 300 members nationwide. IRPT advocates for the inland waterways, industries and companies that serve and utilize our inland rivers, ports and terminals. IRPT and its Members welcome Congressional partnership and pledges to offer its support, organizational resources, and network to aid Congress in achieving long-term sustainability through infrastructure investment.

The solution presented herein by IRPT is specific dedicated funding, by way of, a percentage of existing program funding (INFRA, TIGER, BUILD, etc.) **OR** a standalone discretionary grant program dedicated to the many inland private and public facilities that serve the nation's freight transportation needs. For far too long, appropriation bills such as INFRA and BUILD programs and authorizing legislation like the FAST Act and WRDA have underfunded inland facilities. Additionally, inland facilities cannot compete for funding in INFRA, BUILD, TIGER, etc. because

the project minimum is far too high. **Infrastructure projects sought by inland facilities are far less costly** than the minimum required for those programs.

The good news is we are not seeking increased appropriations, simply dedicated funds from existing programs. For far too long, programs such as INFRA and BUILD and legislation like the FAST Act and WRDA have underfunded inland port and terminal facilities. Therefore, IRPT is requesting that Congress **introduce a new standalone discretionary program** dedicated to inland port and terminal projects.

Historically, any federal assistance to the inland river ports and terminals has been appropriated through Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation. In the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 signed on February 14th, Maritime Administration's budget was funded at over \$1 Billion, with only \$7 million directed spending towards inland ports. Even further, that \$7 million does NOT extend to bulk commodities (liquid or bulk), unless it is a 'new service'.

Even more disturbing is that a new Port Infrastructure Development Program included in the appropriations bill excludes inland ports, more specifically, it states: "projects eligible for funding provided under this heading shall be projects for coastal seaports".

Simply stated, **Inland ports and terminals are NOT on a level-playing field in terms of federal funding opportunities.**

IRPT is requesting Congress introduce/pass/authorize an Inland Port and Terminal Grant Program to level the competitive playing field. Mirrored much like the small shipyard grant program, the inland port and terminal program would:

- Be administered by Maritime Administration;
- Adhere to 60-day submission and 120-day award distribution;
- Include both private and public facilities;

At the same time, the inland port and terminal program would differ from small shipyards in that:

- Funds may be used to construct buildings, physical facilities, purchase equipment, etc.
- May be used for landside infrastructure (facility river, road and rail) projects;

And unlike the Marine Highways program, the inland port and terminal grant program would:

- Extend to both private and public entities;
- May be used for landside infrastructure (facility river, road and rail) projects;
- Extend to bulk (liquid and dry) commodities;

IRPT, on behalf of its members nationwide, urges Congress **introduce a new standalone discretionary program** dedicated to inland projects. IRPT requests that our transportation friends of Congress seriously consider an **Inland Port and Terminal Grant Program**.

Sincerely,

Aimee Andres

Aimee Andres
Executive Director