

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting and defending America's free enterprise system, supports H.R. 5303, the "Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA)" and urges the House to promptly approve this legislation.

The Water Resources Development Act of 2016 would ensure the viability of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works programs including navigation, flood risk management, recreation, and infrastructure and environmental stewardship. Passage of this bill would be an important step toward providing critical economic and environmental benefits to the nation. This bill would authorize new Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works projects.

This measure would continue to build upon the streamlining provisions in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, to allow expedited approval for modifications to existing Corps projects. Additionally, the bill expands the role of local partners in using non-federal interests in implementation and coordination with Corps projects. Completing WRDA this year would continue the commitment Congress made in 2014 to authorize new projects every two years.

The Chamber commends the House for not including provisions that would expand domestic contracting preferences for vital national water infrastructure projects. While so-called "Buy America" mandates may appear beneficial to certain areas of the U.S. economy, the reality is that such requirements are counter-productive and drive up public infrastructure costs, unduly burden contractor supply chains, and reduce overall project competition.

We are disappointed that the bill before the House did not include Section 108 of the Committee bill, which would have clarified targets Congress enacted in WRDA 2014 for increased Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund funding. This provision would ensure that collected revenue from American businesses is being used for its intended purpose in a timely manner. We will continue to advocate for this provision as the legislative process moves forward.

The Chamber urges swift passage of H.R. 5303, the Water Resources Development Act of 2016, so a House and Senate Conference Committee can reconcile the differences and enact the bill this year.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten