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Senators Harkin and Bond Send Letter to Senate Committees Opposing Lock Usage Tax

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Waterways Operators (AWO), the national trade association for the American tugboat, towboat and barge industry, applauds the leadership of two senior U.S. Senators, Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Kit Bond (R-MO), who this week sent strong letters to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee expressing opposition to the Obama Administration’s proposal to fund the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) through a lock usage tax. The letter to the EPW Committee was signed by 21 Senators, including 15 Democrats and 6 Republicans, and the letter to the Finance Committee was signed by 14 Democrats and 6 Republicans.

In the identically worded letters to their colleagues, the Senators pointed out that the lock usage tax unfairly “discriminates against portions of the country that depend on large numbers of locks to move cargo, while giving a free pass to commercial vessels that operate in areas of the country without locks.” The Senators also emphasized the importance of improving “the efficiency of Corps construction of inland waterway projects” as a method for addressing the IWTF’s anticipated revenue shortfall.

“The tugboat, towboat and barge industry is the most economical and environmentally friendly mode of cargo transportation and an important part of the nation’s intermodal transportation network, delivering the building blocks of America’s economy with the smallest carbon footprint of any surface transportation mode,” said AWO President & CEO Thomas A. Allegretti. “A lock usage tax that would hurt the barge industry is unwise and counterproductive to the Administration’s economic and environmental policy goals.”

To read the letter addressed to the Finance Committee, please click [here](#), and to read the letter to the EPW Committee, please click [here](#). For further information, please contact Chris Coakley at (703) 841-9300, extension 297, or via email at ccoakely@vesselalliance.com.

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