



ENSURE A **RELIABLE INLAND WATERWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE**

America's waterways are vital links for the safe, reliable and efficient movement of freight. Every year, barges safely and efficiently carry almost 800 million tons of economically critical cargo, including agricultural products, petroleum, chemicals, coal, steel, cement and containerized cargo. A reliable inland waterways infrastructure is essential to our nation's domestic commerce and international trade. Congress has a responsibility to maintain investments in infrastructure while opposing policies that would hinder or halt commercial navigation.

AWO joins Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) in urging Congress to support the following infrastructure priorities in the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) 2016:

■ **Raise the Major Rehabilitation Threshold to \$50 Million:**

Currently, the routine operation and maintenance of a navigation lock or dam is funded from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Operation and Maintenance account until aggregate costs exceed \$20 million. At that point, the project is reclassified as major rehabilitation and becomes eligible for cost-shared funding through the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF). The current low threshold creates an incentive for the Corps to withhold initiating routine maintenance.

■ **Authorize the Chief's Reports for Calcasieu Lock, Louisiana and the Upper Ohio Navigation Study**

AWO also joins WCI in supporting the following appropriations priorities for FY 2017:

- Provide \$390 million for navigation construction projects to make full use of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund and fund priority navigation construction projects—Olmsted (\$225 million), Lower Monongahela (\$66 million), Kentucky Lock (\$52 million), Chickamauga (\$19 million), LaGrange Lock (\$28 million)
- Increase the Army Corps of Engineers' Operations and Maintenance (O&M) account at least to the FY 2016 level of \$3.1 billion

- Secure \$10 million in the Corps' Investigations account to continue pre-construction engineering and design for the Navigation Ecosystem Sustainability Program

AWO and WCI urge Congress to reject attempts to close locks on active waterways outside of the normal decommissioning process. Unwarranted lock closures impact the reliability of waterborne transportation by preventing commercial vessel operators from making point-to-point deliveries and penalize businesses located above a closed lock by forcing them to utilize less efficient modes of transportation.

AWO and WCI strongly oppose public-private partnerships (P3s) that include the imposition of toll financing mechanisms on commercial vessel operators. Inland barge operators contribute substantial revenues to modernize the locks and dams and participate in making investment decisions. In 2015, the industry supported a 45 percent increase to the federal diesel fuel tax to increase revenue to the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. If the federal government enables private entities to charge tolls for waterways use, barge transportation will become non-competitive and farmers, producers and shippers will be forced to use less efficient modes of transportation.

AWO supports reauthorization and full funding for the Great Lakes Regional Initiative (GLRI) and the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC). There has been no movement of the Asian Carp population front in the Illinois River, a testament to the viability of ongoing federal interagency control efforts. The tugboat, towboat and barge industry has been an active partner in these efforts, and looks forward to continuing to assist federal agencies in habitat, pattern, and other control projects. **AWO also urges Congress to ensure that the Corps of Engineers follows normal procedures for ongoing invasive species control studies at major lock sites, and prevent any attempt by the Corps to utilize lock closures as either an emergency procedure or a long-term invasive species control solution.**