



Rep. Caddy McKeown, Chair  
Sen. Jeff Kruse, Vice Chair  
Rep. Deborah Boone  
Rep. David Gombert  
Sen. Betsy Johnson  
Rep. Wayne Krieger  
Sen. Arnie Roblan  
Sen. Doug Whitsett

January 12, 2016

The Honorable Jo Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Secretary Darcy:

In light of the recently passed FY2016 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, the Oregon Coastal Caucus urges you to consider Oregon's small ports in your allocation of the over \$400 million recently approved for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Operations and Maintenance (O&M) projects. This allocation is intended for O&M projects that were not included in the Administration's FY2016 budget or were inadequately funded.

Oregon has many projects that fall under this scope and funding for these projects is not only desired but necessary for the continued operation and safety of the communities along our coastline. Particularly in the face of current winter storm conditions, we encourage you to dedicate a portion of that more than \$400 million to Oregon for the dredging and other O&M needs that will be critical in the coming months.

The FY16 Omnibus Appropriations Bill directs USACE to give priority to O&M projects that enhance national, regional, or local economic development, promote job growth, and support the U.S. Coast Guard and other Federal agencies.

We are united in our conviction that the Oregon coast's O&M projects unequivocally meet these parameters. A recent economic impact analysis conducted by the State of Oregon showed that one out of every six Oregon jobs is directly or indirectly tied to cargo, recreation, industrial, commercial, or other activities supported by O&M projects at Oregon's ports; these state-wide statistics are only heightened in coastal communities. Oregon's coast needs these projects to be funded at an operational level in order to ensure that hard working coastal families can maintain safety and a basic quality of life. In addition, Oregon O&M projects support Federal agency activities, such as the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Oregon Congressional delegation fought to amend the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986 to specify that ten percent of annual Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenue be dedicated to "emerging harbor projects." The Coastal Caucus is concerned that, even with this minimum requirement, nearly all of the "emerging harbor projects" in Oregon continue to receive zero funding in the Administration's budget.

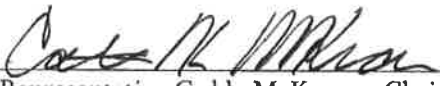
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As a partial solution to this shortfall, the Omnibus specifically allocates \$250 million for “Deep Draft Harbors and Channels.” This qualifies the Ports of Coos Bay, Garibaldi, Newport, Port Orford, Siuslaw, Toledo, Umpqua, and the Columbia River for portions of this funding. The bill also provides \$48 million for “Small, Remote or Subsistence Navigation,” which includes nearly all of the projects mentioned above, as well as projects at the Ports of Bandon, Brookings Harbor, Depoe Bay, and Gold Beach.

Funding is not only needed for dredging, but also to ensure that necessary jetty repairs are made. It is particularly important that funding be made available for the Coos Bay North Jetty and Tillamook South Jetty. The maintenance of these jetties is imperative for the well-being of these communities and the safety of the federal, state, and local employees that work in and around these harbors.

We appreciate your consideration of this urgent request. Federal funds are essential to keep our ports open and safe, and to ensure Oregon’s economy is able to thrive.

Sincerely,

  
Representative Caddy McKeown, Chair

  
Senator Jeff Kruse, Vice-Chair

  
Senator Betsy Johnson

  
Representative Deborah Boone

  
Senator Arnie Roblan

  
Representative David Gomberg

  
Senator Doug Whitsett

  
Representative Wayne Krieger

cc: Senator Ron Wyden  
Senator Jeff Merkley  
Representative Peter DeFazio  
Representative Kurt Schrader  
Representative Suzanne Bonamici  
Representative Earl Blumenauer  
Representative Greg Walden