

# WATER RESOURCES REFORM & DEVELOPMENT ACT

## Invest in Water Navigation, Flood Control, Environmental & Water Infrastructure

### Action Needed:

Pass the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 (H.R. 7776 / S. 4137) this year.

These bills would continue the biennial tradition of reauthorizing authorizes projects and policies for navigation, flood control, hydropower, recreation, water supply and emergency management.

### Background:

- The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) authorizes projects and policies for navigation, flood control, hydropower, recreation, water supply and emergency management for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program (USACE). USACE infrastructure includes more than 12,000 miles of inland navigable waterways, 900 ports and harbors, 14,000 miles of levees, 700 dams, 230 lock chambers, 75 hydro-power plants, and 4,000 recreation sites. Congress last authorized WRDA in 2022, with an intent to reauthorize the legislation every two years to provide regular congressional oversight into the nation's water resources infrastructure programs.

### AGC Message:

- **Maintain the Bipartisan Tradition.** Since 2014 the House and Senate have passed a biennial water resources infrastructure bill that helps address our nation's aging system of inland waterways, coastal harbors and ports, locks and dams, flood control protections, and maintaining a commitment to restore critical environmental areas of our country. Congress must continue the biennial process and to not include controversial policies that could jeopardize broad bipartisan support for addressing local water needs.
- **Water Resources Infrastructure is Critical to the Economy and Yields Very High Returns.** Harbors maintained by USACE handle 95 percent of America's import and export trade, while the inland waterways system moves freight at half the cost of rail and one-tenth the cost of truck transportation. USACE provides an annual estimated national economic development net benefit of \$87.1 billion and stimulated \$27.3 billion in returns to the U.S. Treasury. With program spending just above \$5 billion a year, that equates to a 16-to-1 return in economic benefits, and a 5-to-1 return in revenue to the Treasury. USACE projects prevent an estimated \$48.5 billion in damages annually from storms and severe weather.
- **Require Full Use of Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and Inland Waterways Trust Fund.** These trust funds are vital to maintain our nation's global competitiveness. However, both trust funds often collect more in revenue from shippers than what Congress always appropriates to the Corps to maintain our harbors and inland waterways. Additionally, the trust funds have approximately \$9 billion in already collected revenues that is sitting idle in the U.S. Treasury. WRDA 2020 implemented to requirements to eventually require full use of the HMTF. These trust funds must be used for its intended purposes to ensure the investments in American harbors, ports, and inland waterways are properly funded.
- **Hold USACE Accountable for Bureaucratic Construction Delays: Process and Payment of Change Orders.** No matter what the construction project, unforeseen problems will arise and must be addressed. To do so, USACE issues change orders to instruct and pay contractors to fix these problems. However, USACE often takes months to process a change order during construction. This delay in direction from USACE causes project delays, cost increases, and litigation.