



November 2, 2010

IMPORTANT THAT YOU READ AND ACT ON THIS!

I believe it is time for a **GREAT LAKES WIDE MEETING** of representatives from all 115 harbor communities to discuss the status of our mission, the impact of the upcoming election, strategies to succeed with dedicating the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT), alternative approaches to funding our harbor maintenance, organization and funding of the GLSHC and its mission, etc. Remember that we need to fight for (1) immediate funding for 2011 and 2012 under the present process of “earmarks”, (2) significantly increased funding through dedicating the HMT to its original intended purpose, and (3) inclusion of our over 70 shallow draft harbors in future President/Administration budgets (commercial harbors are presently included, but need increased funding.) Further, we need a back-up plan to protect our harbors just in case the Federal Government defaults (partially or fully) on its maintenance obligation. All of these steps are critical to the future maintenance of our harbors, and we must continue to renew strategies to achieve our goals and mission. Therefore, I am asking each of you to support by attending a critically important GLSHC meeting on January 18 and 19, 2011 (likely at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport.) We will be inviting key members of Congress, Army Corps, HMT/harbor advocate organizations, and others to inform you as to the present status and future outlook for harbor maintenance funding. Remember, the GLSHC is a grassroots citizen driven movement, and we need you and all 115 harbor communities’ voices at this meeting. As in past meetings, we will provide you on-line registration at our website two weeks prior to the meeting. For right now, please response to me by return email with a simple yes or no as to whether you or another representative would likely attend.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS’ HARBOR FACT SHEETS -- Please take a few moments and ensure that someone in your harbor community is reviewing the Army Corps’ Fact Sheet that describes the present condition of dredging and infrastructure for your federal harbor channel. You are strongly encouraged to (1) make sure the condition of dredging and seawalls is adequately described in the Project Needs Section, (2) that the economic and safety consequences of not maintaining your federal harbor channel are factually, but graphically, presented, and (3) that you include the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition as part of the “major stakeholders” for your harbor. You can review the present fact sheet for your federal harbor at www.lre.usace.mil/greatlakes/navigation/great_lakes_harbors_information/inc.

As part of the “**GREAT LAKES FLY-IN TO D.C.**” **ON SEPTEMBER 14-16**, the GLSHC represented the interests of the 115 federal harbor communities of the Great Lakes. Meetings were held with key Senators and Representatives on critical legislation that would ensure that tax revenues into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) are used for their intended purpose of dredging and maintaining our harbors. From the start of the GLSHC, we defined our mission as “replacing the present broken funding process of earmarks with an adequate, sustainable, and needs-based budget process.” Further, we said we would unify the voices of grassroots citizens from commercial and shallow draft harbors throughout the Great Lakes (documented by officially declared Resolutions of Support) and build supportive relationships with other harbor advocate organizations from the Great Lakes and elsewhere in the nation.

The “Great Lakes Fly-In to D.C.” reflects the considerable progress being made by the GLSHC in pursuit of the above mission and unifying tactics. We joined with a broad spectrum of some 20 other harbor advocates (carriers, unions, businesses, ports, tribal, Great Lakes Commission) in calling for the House and Senate to act now on passing the House Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), or stand alone bills in the Senate (S.3213) and the House (H.R.4844). In these meetings, the presence of the GLSHC at the table and representing the citizens of the Great Lakes harbor communities was commented on favorably as small harbors have previously not had a collective voice in the funding process. In all cases, the reception and discussion was supportive in correcting the present “simply wrong” process that collects taxes to maintain federally authorized harbors and then uses almost 50% as general funds to “reduce the deficit” while harbor communities throughout the nation are suffering from inadequate maintenance. Senator Levin (Mi) has introduced legislation (S.3213) that now has 15 co-sponsors. Congressmen Stupak (D. Mi) and Boustany (R. La) have introduced similar legislation (H.R.4844) that has bipartisan support from 49 co-sponsors. Congressman Oberstar (Mn), Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has included H.R.4844 in his panel’s mark-up of the Water Resources Development Act of 2010.

Bottom line, these actions, bills, and sponsorship in the House and Senate represent our best ever chance to substantially increase and sustain adequate funding for maintenance of Great Lakes and the Nation’s federal harbors. This window of opportunity and momentum is particularly critical, however, since some of the strongest legislative harbor/waterway advocates are retiring this year—including Stupak (D. Mi), Voinovich (R. Oh), and Obey (D. Wi). Further, even with this growing sponsorship, the bills to accomplish our mission face an uphill battle of winning over members of states with little or no federal harbors, the election recess, a lame-duck congress for the balance of the year, and a likely reconstituted House and Senate after the elections. All that I can assure you is that the “Great Lakes Fly-In to D.C.” with a unified and broad group of harbor advocates has already produced incremental action and will likely increase the sponsorship and chances of ultimate approval of this critical legislation to meet the federal government’s responsibility to maintain all our harbors. (Note: For further details, the new GLSHC website www.greatlakessmallharbors.org contains the list of meetings with Senators and Representatives, GLSHC letters to Senators and representatives of the great Lakes requesting their support, a fact sheet regarding the GLSHC and its position regarding HMT, and a one page paper prepared by the Lakes Carrier’s Association and RAMP.)

I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you for your support.

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