



September 7, 2010

Dear Congressman _____:

On behalf of the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition (GLSHC), representing the collective voices of over 9 million citizens in the counties of their 115 federal harbor communities across the Great Lakes, I write to urge your support for H.R. 4844, legislation that would ensure that tax revenues into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) are used for their intended purpose of dredging and maintaining harbors. Clearly, the present funding process of relying on Congressional adds or “earmarks” to sustain our federal harbors is “broken”, and endangers the quality of life, economic security, and personal safety of our citizens. The GLSHC has a very focused mission—“replacing this broken process with an adequate, sustainable, and needs-based budget process.”

Some have likened our harbors today to clogged arteries. The problem is particularly acute on the Great Lakes, which faces a dredging crisis. Harbors, rivers and other waterways continue to get shallower and narrower due to inadequate dredging. Funding for Army Corps of Engineers maintenance dredging consistently falls short of needs. Unfortunately, literally billions of dollars have accumulated in the HMTF over the years instead of being used for their intended purpose of dredging. That is simply wrong. You can create thousands of jobs across the Great Lakes and the nation by supporting H.R. 4844.

H.R. 4844 would fix this problem in the same way that legislation enacted in previous Congresses addressed similar problems with the Airport and Airways Trust Fund and the Highway Trust Fund. We are pleased that the Congressional Budget Office has confirmed that there is no budget score for H.R. 4844.

We urge you to find a way to enact H.R. 4844 this year. Congressman Jim Oberstar has included H.R. 4844 in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which the panel approved in July. If WRDA is not enacted, we urge you to find a way to enact this law this year, perhaps as a stand alone bill or as part of another bill.

H.R. 4844 can revitalize the 115 Great Lakes federal harbors. Please help us find a way to enact this critical legislation this year. Please feel free to contact me at cmay08@charter.net or 231.889.5607 if I can help in any way. We can’t keep our harbors viable without your help.

Sincerely,

Chuck May, Chair Pro Tem
Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition