



February 23, 2010

Senator Debbie Stabenow
133 Hart Senate Office Building
District of Columbia 20510-2022

Dear Senator Stabenow:

On behalf of the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition (GLSHC), we wish to again thank you for your leadership in obtaining increased funding for the federal harbors of Michigan and for the colleague letter seeking support to use the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for its original intended purpose. The \$6 million Michigan regional appropriation you fought for and obtained will fund harbor dredging for 13 communities in 2010.

As you know, the GLSHC is the collective voice of citizens and advocates of the 57 federally authorized harbors of Michigan and the 120 federal harbors throughout the Great Lakes system. The Coalition is authorized by official Resolutions of Support from over 75% of Michigan's harbor communities. The mission of these collective voices is to ensure funding for dredging and infrastructure maintenance necessary to sustain their harbors—the very lifeblood of their communities. Your work in obtaining the Michigan regional appropriations for both 2009 and 2010 has empowered the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the channel gateway for 23 harbor communities. Thanks to your efforts and that of others in Congress, 2009 and 2010 are the first years in a decade where the Corps received enough funding to meet the annual dredging needs of our Michigan harbors and to begin to address some of the substantial backlogs.

As you recognize, keeping our Great Lakes harbors viable through ongoing maintenance dredging and infrastructure repair is not only a federal responsibility but makes great economic payback for the State, Great Lakes Region, and the Nation. This economic payback can be visualized by the many images of families enjoying the beaches and the scenic vistas of boats of all sizes moving in and out of our harbor channels. Further, the John Glen study authorized by Congress and released this past year quantifies this economic impact of Great Lake shallow draft harbors as over \$5.5 billion annually. This magnitude of payback dwarfs the annual cost of maintaining these harbors. Investing \$20-30 million a year for needed dredging and infrastructure repair for these federal shallow draft harbors of Michigan and Great Lakes represents less than 1% of the annual economic benefit! Further, the funding exists in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (balance of over \$5 billion) and the annual tax collections of \$1.2 to \$1.5 billion underpinning the fund.

While progress from the last two years is very gratifying, we need your continuing support and that of your Congressional colleagues again this year. The safety of our people, their quality of life, and the basic economic viability of these harbor communities and their citizens more than justify the Federal Government's investment in fulfilling its "authorized responsibility." Specifically, we request your support for the following in the 2011 appropriations process and future administration budgets:

- \$7 million Michigan regional dredging appropriation.
- \$17 million infrastructure appropriation (Grand Marais and others).
- \$4 million for underfunding of commercial harbors.
- Colleague support for needed dredging and infrastructure appropriations for harbors of the other Great Lakes states.
- Continued and renewed efforts to include adequate funding for shallow draft harbors in future administration budgets and to "firewall" the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for its original purpose—harbor maintenance.
- The Great Lakes Task Forces to specifically adopt and advocate for the Mission Statement with which the harbor communities have charged their Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition—"an equitable, sustainable, needs-based budget process that adequately maintains all commercial and shallow draft federal harbors of the Great Lakes."

In closing, the GLSHC sincerely thanks you for your supportive efforts and results. The Coalition stands ready on behalf of the 2 million citizens behind its Resolutions of Support to help you and other Congressional harbor advocates in achieving the needed 2011 appropriations and adequate line item funding in future Administration budgets.

Sincerely,

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