



## GREAT LAKES LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

### 2015 Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus

*Buffalo, New York  
September 25-26, 2015*

### Resolution on Maintaining Great Lakes Commercial and Recreational Harbors

- WHEREAS,** Great Lakes commercial and recreational harbors form an interconnected system of commerce and tourism linking the Great Lakes states and provinces together and with the rest of the world; and
- WHEREAS,** these harbors support a robust shipping and recreational boating industry within the Great Lakes; and
- WHEREAS,** domestic shippers and importers using Great Lakes and coastal harbors contribute to the annual \$1.8 billion collected in federal harbor maintenance taxes. Congress established the tax to fund harbor operation and maintenance; and
- WHEREAS,** despite a balance of \$8.7 billion in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, the Great Lakes harbor maintenance needs are not being met; and
- WHEREAS,** in 2014, Congress adopted the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) to ensure greater tax fairness by gradually phasing in from FY15 to FY24 an appropriation equal to 100 percent of annual harbor maintenance tax collections, allocating not less than 10 percent of all increased funding over FY12 levels to the Great Lakes, and directing that all federal harbors be maintained. In FY15, Congress appropriated \$100 million less than WRRDA specified, and it is anticipated that Congress's FY16 appropriation will fall short of the target in WRRDA; and
- WHEREAS,** despite passage of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, no funding has been provided for the 71 Great Lakes recreational harbors and only 11 of 41 commercial harbors have received funding for dredging; and
- WHEREAS,** the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund is not being fully utilized and WRRDA is not being implemented as enacted; and



**WHEREAS,** communities with these unfunded harbors have little means to self-fund their harbor maintenance and provide for the safety of their residents or visitors on the water; and

**WHEREAS,** the annual cost of maintaining all 112 federal small harbors of the Great Lakes – supporting the nine million citizens within the counties these harbors anchor – is only \$20 million, which is less than one percent of the annual national harbor operations and maintenance budget; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED,** that the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus urges Congress to use the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for its intended purpose and to implement the Water Resources Reform and Development Act as enacted to address the harbor maintenance needs of small Great Lakes harbors; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** that the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus urges Members of Congress from the Great Lakes states to unite in advocating for a \$20 million set aside within the annual federal harbor operations and maintenance budget for the purpose of maintaining the 112 small federal harbors of the Great Lakes; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** that copies of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, Members of Congress from the Great Lakes states, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the governors of the eight Great Lakes states.

*Adopted on September 26, 2015.*