

May 7, 2012

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John L. Mica
U.S. House of Representatives
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Boxer and Representative Mica:

As the House and Senate conferees prepare to move forward on a surface transportation bill, the following agricultural organizations strongly encourage conferees to include the *Realize America's Maritime Promise (RAMP) Act*, H.R. 104, in the final bill.

The *RAMP Act*, introduced in the House by Rep. Charles Boustany and in the Senate by Sen. Carl Levin, received wide bipartisan support and was included in the House-passed version of the surface transportation measure (H.R.4348).

U.S. ports, waterways and harbors are in desperate need of maintenance and dredging in order to keep channels open for commerce. Yet in recent years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is put in an untenable position of scrambling for sufficient funds for these activities because the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund is being tapped into for other purposes. This creates unnecessary uncertainty concerning the predictability of key U.S. shipping channels and ports to accommodate the demand for transport, and puts agricultural producers, crop input providers, processors, and exporters at a distinct competitive disadvantage.

That is why the following organizations and their members support the goals of the *RAMP Act*, which would ensure that monies collected in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund are utilized in full for their intended purpose - operations and maintenance. We urge you to support inclusion of the *RAMP Act* in the final surface transportation bill emerging from the conference.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Soybean Association
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Chicken Council
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Turkey Federation
The Fertilizer Institute
USA Rice Federation

cc: House and Senate Conferees