



**Transportation Brief  
March 16 - 17, 2016**

**Background**

The Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition represents nearly 40 chambers dedicated to the revitalization of our region, which is the backbone of our nation's economy. The Coalition has played an important role in the development of key provisions in MAP-21 in 2012, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, and the FAST Act of 2015. One of the major bi-partisan goals of this Congressional session is enactment of another Water Resources Development Act. Biennial WRDA bills and implementation of the FAST Act are major priorities of the Coalition.

**The Coalition's Priorities**

**Water Resources Development Act**

In 2014, Congress made a significant advance in transportation infrastructure with the passage of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014). The measure sets annual national harbor maintenance spending targets with a goal of spending 100% of annual Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) receipts by Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, establishes the Great Lakes Navigation System (GLNS), partially sets aside 10% of annual HMTF spending for GLNS projects, and directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to manage the component projects of the GLNS as a single, comprehensive, interdependent system.

The Congress is preparing another WRDA bill for 2016, which provides an opportunity to solidify the gains in WRRDA 2014. The Coalition's priorities for WRDA 2016 include:

- Applying the 10% set-aside for GLNS projects to all annual HMTF spending. While the USACE has continued to provide at least 10% of annual HMTF spending to GLNS projects despite the WRRDA 2014 allocation only applying to a portion of HMTF spending, this legislative change would protect the GLNS in future budgets.
- Establishing an annual HMTF spending "floor" so that if a WRRDA 2014 annual HMTF spending target of less than 100% of annual receipts falls below the previous year's HMTF spending due to a decline in expected annual HMTF receipts, the actual target to be met by Congressional Appropriations Committees would be not less than the previous fiscal year's spending level. Without such legislation, the FY17 HMTF target will be approximately \$83M less than FY16 HMTF spending.
- Overseeing the USACE's development of its Economic Revaluation Report (ERR) for the new Soo Lock project. While initially authorized in 1986, construction on the second Poe-sized lock has been stalled by a faulty initial economic analysis that produced a benefit/cost ratio below 1.0. Last year, the USACE reprogrammed funding to conduct the ERR and said that it would

take 2 years to complete. The Congress should maintain pressure on the USACE to complete the ERR more quickly and to incorporate into the ERR the findings of the Department of Homeland Security regarding the national economic impacts of an unplanned Poe Lock closure.

- Approving construction of a second set of 600' X 110' locks at each of the Emsworth, Dashiields and Montgomery Locks and Dams on the Upper Ohio River in Pennsylvania. The USACE is preparing a Chief's Report for this project. Congress must urge the USACE to expedite this report to align with the timing of 2016 WRDA negotiations. When the report is submitted to the Congress, the Coalition strongly supports WRDA 2016 authorizing construction of this project. The existing locks were built prior to World War II and are the oldest structures with the smallest lock chambers in the Ohio River system.

### **Surface Transportation Reauthorization**

The Congress passed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and the President signed it into law on December 4, 2015. The Coalition assisted with a number of key features in the legislation critical to business and supply chains.

While the funding aspects of the FAST Act are addressed in the mandatory highway funding formulas, implementation of these programs and policy changes now requires federal agency actions. The Coalition requests that Congress vigorously oversee the Administration's implementation of the FAST Act to ensure its goals are achieved.

### **Summary**

American prosperity is closely linked with the ability to move people, goods and materials seamlessly within our trading area, which produces 35% of U.S. manufacturing output, provides 40% of U.S. manufacturing jobs, and accounts for 28% of exports. We urge the expeditious passage of a WRDA bill in 2016, completion of the Soo Lock project ERR, and implementation of the FAST Act, and we are ready and willing to work with Congress in achieving these goals.

### **Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition, Contributing Chambers of Commerce:**

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber  
Allegheny Conference  
Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce  
Buffalo Niagara Partnership  
Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce  
The Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg  
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce  
Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber  
Columbus Chamber of Commerce  
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce  
Detroit Regional Chamber  
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce  
Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership  
Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Cleveland Partnership  
Greater Des Moines Partnership  
Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Louisville Inc. – The Metro Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce

Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce  
Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Lake Carriers Association  
Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce  
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce  
Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce  
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce  
Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce  
Northern Michigan Regional Chamber Alliance  
Plattsburgh North Country Chamber of Commerce  
Quad Cities Chamber  
Rockford Chamber of Commerce  
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce  
Southwest Michigan First  
Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce  
West Michigan Chamber Coalition  
Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber

