



John F. Reinhart
CEO/Executive Director

Virginia Port Authority
600 World Trade Center
Norfolk, VA 23510

September 24, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Environment and Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Environment and Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

On behalf of The Port of Virginia, I am writing to express our support for S. 3021, America's Water Infrastructure Act and thank you for your leadership in reaching a bicameral, bipartisan agreement for a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill. Continuing the two year cycle of WRDA bills is critical for maintaining the momentum of our nation's water infrastructure projects and providing consistency to non-federal sponsors who are planning our own investments as we partner with the Army Corps of Engineers to deliver these important projects.

The Port of Virginia understands the value of infrastructure investment. We are currently investing nearly \$700 million to add one million containers to our annual capacity by 2020 and meet the need of rising and record-setting volumes. The port's ability to move cargo efficiently and economically serves as a catalyst for job creation throughout the nation; reduces costs for American businesses and consumers; and results in billions of dollars in national economic benefits.

The Port of Virginia is the fifth largest port in the nation and among the fastest growing on the US East Coast. This modern port, with shipping channels that are currently 50-feet deep and with extensive intermodal connections to the Midwest, is a critical gateway for the movement of goods across the country and to the world. Fifty-five percent of the cargo moving through this port is transported to or from other states. The Port of Virginia also moves the highest percentage (36 percent) of all waterborne cargo by rail to national inland markets of any East Coast port. More than 14,000 businesses from all contiguous 48 states move cargo through Virginia, with 53% of all cargo moved through The Port of Virginia being American exports.

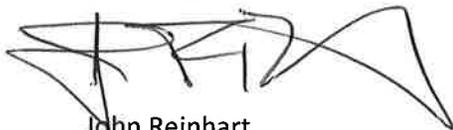
Of equal importance, Hampton Roads is one of the nation's 17 strategic seaports and home to the world's largest naval base, the US Navy's Second Fleet, and is the sole homeport for nuclear powered aircraft carriers on the east coast. Virginia also supports a diverse trade of bulk commodities and exports more coal than any other state in the nation, representing 40 percent of total US coal exports.

Given the significant economic impact of the port, our federal navigation channels and Army Corps Civil Works projects play critical roles in our national economic security. It is with that role in mind that we are particularly pleased with the inclusion of Section 1403 of S. 3021, America's Water Infrastructure Act, which authorizes the improvements for Norfolk Harbor identified in the June 29, 2018 Report of the Chief of Engineers as well as modifying Thimble Shoal Channel based on the February 5, 2018 "Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development".

As ship lines consolidate into alliances and deploy ultra-large container vessels with increasing frequency, The Port of Virginia is evolving and preparing for the future. Since 2014, vessels calling on The Port of Virginia have nearly doubled in size - from 8,000 TEUs to 14,400 TEUs. Based on this growth, the port community is preparing for 16,000 and 18,000 TEU vessels in the next few years. The authority provided in Section 1403 will allow us to widen and deepen Norfolk Harbor and channels to make way for safe and efficient two-way passage of these big ships. Virginia's 50-foot channels are critical to its success, and with an additional five feet of depth, ships could come to — and leave — Virginia fully loaded with cargo. Widening the channel up to 1,400' would turn a one-lane street into two lanes and prevent delays to commercial and military vessels caused by U.S. Coast Guard restrictions.

Using funds appropriated by the Virginia General Assembly and approved by the Governor, The Port of Virginia has already started Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) and is on pace to begin construction in January 2020. We urge the Senate to take swift action to pass S. 3021 and send it to the President for his signature, so we can continue delivering this important piece of infrastructure in partnership with the Army Corps and serving to be a Catalyst for Commerce for the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Reinhart", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Reinhart
CEO and Executive Director