

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2018

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to express appreciation for your recent comments about modernizing the Soo Locks and to reiterate our willingness to work with you on this vital project. To that end, we respectfully offer the following suggestions on ways that your leadership could help advance this infrastructure project that is critical to Michigan's and the nation's economy, employment, and manufacturing sectors.

- **Twinning the Soo Locks**

The Soo Locks facility currently consists of four parallel locks: the Poe, the MacArthur, the Sabin, and the Davis. However, only the Poe and MacArthur locks are operational, and only the 1,200-foot Poe is of sufficient size for the passage of the vessels that carry seventy percent of all iron ore between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes. It is for this reason that an unscheduled outage of the Poe Lock would devastate the regional and the national economies, harm our manufacturing sector, and threaten our national security.

According to a report conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, a 6-month closure of the nearly 50-year old Poe Lock would result in a 75% decrease in Great Lakes steel production, and nearly all North American appliance, automobile, railcar, and construction, farm, and mining equipment production to cease. Millions of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity would be lost.

At Congressional direction, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) is currently conducting an Economic Reevaluation Report to analyze the benefits and costs of constructing an additional Poe-sized lock, correcting errors in the Army Corps' original analysis. To help enable Congress to fund this critically important project, it is imperative that the Army Corps and the Office of Management and Budget provide an accurate evaluation of this project's importance to the nation's economy. We welcome any leadership that you can provide to see that this occurs. In addition, we hope that your administration will request the necessary funding for this project to proceed in the coming fiscal years.

- **Near-term operations and maintenance funding.**

Even with sufficient funding and an economic analysis that accurately reflects the importance of building another Poe-sized lock, it will be many years before this construction project is completed. In the intervening years, the Army Corps needs

sufficient funding to ensure the existing lock complex remains operational and open for commerce. Unfortunately, funding in the Administration's FY2018 and FY2019 budgets fell far short of the funding that is required.

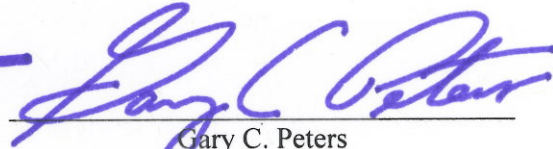
According to the Army Corps' Detroit District, \$23.2 million is required in FY2018 for operation and maintenance costs for the Soo Locks complex. However, the Administration's budget only contained \$8.9 million. We would hope that following the enactment of the recent omnibus appropriations bill, the Army Corps' work plan for this year would be adjusted to fill this funding gap. In addition, the Administration's FY2019 budget request contains \$21 million less than the Army Corps deems necessary to maintain the Soo Locks. We will work with our Congressional colleagues to provide sufficient funding in FY2019. Going forward, we ask that the White House support the funding needed to maintain the lock system before and as construction of an additional lock is underway.

Thank you again for highlighting the importance of the Soo Locks to Michigan and to the entire country. We hope to work with you, your Administration, and our colleagues in the Senate and the House to advance this critically important infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator