

United States Senate

May 19, 2016

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army
Department of the Army, Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Jo-Ellen Darcy,

We write to reaffirm the critical importance of ensuring the reliability and expanding the capacity of the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The recent meetings we have both held at the Locks with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers highlighted the profound harm that an outage would have on the economy and security of Michigan, the Great Lakes region, and the entire nation. We appreciate your working with us to secure funding for the cost-benefit study needed for a replacement lock, and we ask that every effort be made to complete this analysis as quickly as possible.

The Soo Locks serve as a gateway to transport nearly 80 million tons of goods and raw materials that supply Michigan's agricultural, mining, and manufacturing industries. Currently, nearly 70% of cargo vessels are forced to use the Poe Lock because they are too large to pass through the one other lock that is still operational. The transportation of iron ore to integrated steel manufacturing facilities in the Great Lakes region is almost completely dependent on a functioning Poe Lock, which was last rebuilt in 1968.

A recent study by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) found that a disruption of the Soo Locks would likely cause a near complete shutdown of Great Lakes steel production. The disruption of shipping from even a short-term closure of the Poe Lock would devastate the automobile, mining, appliance, and other manufacturing industries in the Great Lakes region and across North America. DHS estimates that a six-month shutdown of the Poe Lock would result in a loss of \$1.1 trillion in economic output and nearly 11 million jobs.

As you know, the Office of Management and Budget has approved \$1.35 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reevaluate the costs and benefits of replacing the Davis and Sabin Locks with a Poe-sized lock capable of handling the largest commercial ships on the Great Lakes. We urge you to complete the Economic Reevaluation Report as quickly as possible in order to begin the process of building a Poe-sized replacement lock. In producing this study, we also strongly encourage you to take into account the findings of the Homeland Security Department's report.

Thank you for your consideration and please keep us informed as the Army Corps proceeds with this important study.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator