

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2012

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on the Budget
B-71 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

As you formulate the Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, we respectfully request that you apportion all FY13 estimated Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) proceeds towards this tax's intended purpose—maintenance dredging of our nation's ports and harbors.

Our harbors and related waterways are significant drivers of our economy, employing more than 13 million Americans and conveying almost \$4 trillion in international trade. Almost a quarter century ago, Congress recognized the importance of these assets and created a reliable stream of maintenance dredging funding in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF). Unfortunately, over the last decade, the Bush and Obama Administrations have failed to fully utilize this fund, allocating only one-half to two-thirds of the revenue generated by the HMT towards harbor maintenance.

As a result, the HMTF has already accumulated a surplus of more than \$7 billion while the majority of our nation's harbors—including eight of the 10 largest ports—are not being maintained to their fully authorized widths and depths, thus constricting our ability to export products, engage in international trade and create jobs. The Administration's request for FY13 continues this trend, only allocating around half of the HMTF's projected collections to this fund's intended purpose.

At a time when the national unemployment rate continues to exceed eight percent, we believe it is imperative that all the revenue generated by the HMT be fully committed towards dredging our nation's ports, an activity that will put Americans back to work and return economic prosperity to our manufacturing, agriculture and energy sectors.

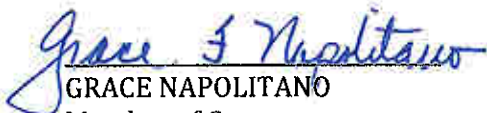
From our perspective, it is inappropriate for Congress to impose a tax for one purpose only to utilize the proceeds from this tax as a mechanism to finance spending on other programs. If we allow this trend to continue we are only degrading the taxpayer's trust of "user-pays" accounts within the Federal government, such as the HMTF, the Highway Trust Fund, and the Aviation Trust Fund.

Considering this information, we respectfully ask that you fully apportion the estimated HMT receipts towards maintenance dredging. We thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this request and stand ready to assist you in any way necessary.

Respectfully,


JEFF LANDRY
Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


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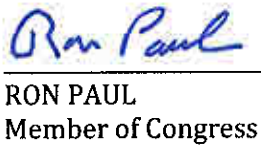

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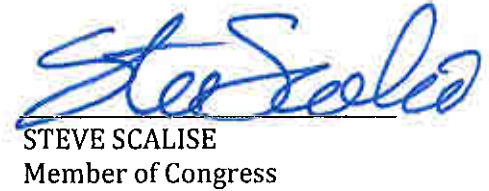

CANDICE MILLER
Member of Congress

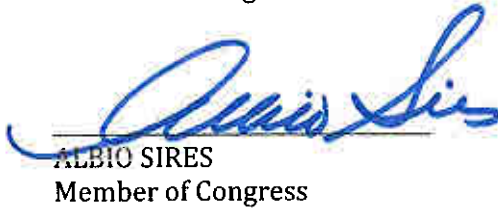

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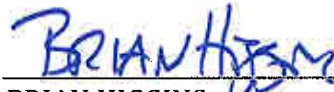
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