

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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Pass Water Resources Development Act to Keep Ports Competitive

WASHINGTON, DC — Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, (TTD), issues the following statement regarding the markup of H.R. 5303, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016:

“We are pleased that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is taking long-overdue steps to accelerate much needed investments in our nation’s seaports. With the global marketplace becoming increasingly cutthroat, this WRDA reform legislation will help ensure our seaports can stay competitive and remain a source for middle-class jobs.

“The legislative package includes important reforms to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF), which was established nearly 30 years ago to guarantee that our ports and harbors are maintained and fully dredged. Unfortunately, a large portion of HMTF revenue, which is collected by taxing the value of cargo, is unspent or redirected to other congressional priorities. While the 2014 water resources bill made strides in fixing this problem, the reforms are non-binding and allow large balances to persist. H.R. 5303 advances additional reforms by converting the funds to mandatory spending, ensuring the money is delivered as intended. This change will help our struggling ports accommodate growing cargo demand and increasingly larger ships. With the Panama Canal expansion nearing completion, this legislation is particularly timely.

“We thank Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Subcommittee Chairman Gibbs and Subcommittee Ranking Member Napolitano for moving forward this bipartisan bill and urge swift passage.”

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, (TTD) provides a bold voice for workers in every mode of transportation devoted to protecting middle-class jobs, expanding collective bargaining, and ensuring modern, safe, and secure transportation operations and infrastructure. For more information, visit us at www.ttd.org.

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