



A bold voice for transportation workers

October 24, 2019

**Support the Passage of H.R. 2440,
The Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to support the Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act (H.R. 2440) when it is considered under suspension on Monday, October 28th. This bipartisan legislation has been introduced by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-MO), Subcommittee Chair Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Subcommittee Ranking Member Bruce Westerman (R-AR) and Representative Mike Kelly (R-PA). TTD has [previously endorsed](#) H.R. 2440, and we strongly support its passage by the full House.

The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund levies a tax on goods arriving via ship to U.S. ports and harbors. In turn, these funds are used for critical port and harbor improvement projects, including the dredging of these facilities that is required to accommodate the increasingly larger vessels that call at our ports. The value of the HMTF is multifold; it allows the U.S. to remain competitive in a global and interconnected economy while creating thousands of good paying jobs in the maritime, longshore, and dredging industries.

For years, the HMTF has been misused and underutilized. Poorly designed budget restrictions have opened up the trust fund to fiscal raids for purposes unrelated to port and harbor infrastructure while simultaneously preventing the full expenditure of its annual receipts on worthwhile projects. This has led to dredging backlogs across the nation, despite a \$9.3 billion unobligated balance that sits idly in the Trust Fund.

H.R. 2440 would allow these funds to be spent where they are needed, ensure that harmful delays in expenditures do not reoccur, and protect revenues from diversion to other budget items. The improvements to our port and harbor infrastructure from these changes will be substantial, and the effects felt throughout many domestic industries connected by our multimodal freight network.

The time for positive reforms of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund in order to better serve our nation's needs is now. We strongly urge you to vote yes on H.R. 2440.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry I. Willis".

Larry I. Willis
President

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