



September 13, 2013

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The Geosynthetic Materials Association and its 80+ member companies urge you to move forward on H.R.3080, the “Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA),” as soon as practicable. Long overdue, a new WRRDA bill would reform and authorize U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (Army Corps) Civil Works programs and policies related to navigation, flood risk management, recreation, infrastructure and environmental stewardship.

This legislation would be an important step toward providing critical economic benefits to the nation, its people and businesses. Strategic investments in the nation’s navigation network have a dramatic direct-employment effect on the hardest hit segment of the economy—construction—while simultaneously delivering substantial benefits to the country’s global competitiveness. Based on a 2012 report conducted by the Associated Equipment Distributors, one dollar spent on infrastructure construction produces roughly double (\$1.92) the initial spending in direct and indirect economic output. The long-term impact is also significant, with a dollar in aggregate public infrastructure spending generating \$3.21 in economic output (GDP) over a 20-year period.

Maintaining our nation’s Federal channels to constructed dimensions and deepening channels to ensure the U.S. continues to have a world-class maritime transportation system are of critical importance to the health of the port and barge industries and the businesses and jobs that rely on them. International trade accounts for more than a quarter of the nation’s GDP and more than 38 million American jobs.

The United States needs to create a modern lock and dam infrastructure on the nation’s inland waterways. Effectively, all of America’s exports in commodities such as coal, fuel oils, gasoline, crude petroleum, and agriculture products such as grain and soy beans are shipped by water. Waterways are critical to keeping our domestic supply chain competitive. There is a \$14-per-ton cost savings for shipping on the inland waterways; this translates to farmer, shipper, and consumer cost savings, and reduced congestion on the roads and rails. However, while the private sector constantly updates its operations, our 21st century economy relies on 1930s-era technology for locks and dams.

Levees got a D- in the most recent American Society of Civil Engineers report card. A WRDA reauthorization bill should improve the safety of the nation's dams and levees that protect communities, farms, manufacturing facilities and assets.

H.R. 3080 would deliver reforms and policies that would speed the Army Corps project delivery process, prioritize investments, provide resilience, protect communities, and keep faith with the Constitutional responsibility for supporting interstate commerce. Together, these results would create and sustain jobs and support the nation's economy.

While a bill addressing a range of water issues and policies is not without some controversy, the United States should not miss opportunities to spur economic growth, improve our global competitiveness, and create jobs. We urge the House to move forward with consideration of a new WRRDA bill—the time to act is now.

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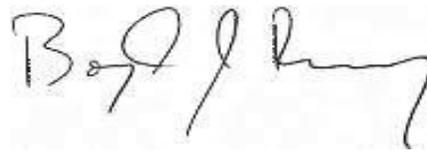
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Sincerely,



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