

Texas Transportation Commission

125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483

September 12, 2013

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
& Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
& Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water Resources
& Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tim Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water Resources
& Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Shuster and Gibbs, and Ranking Members Rahall and Bishop:

Congratulations on your bipartisan introduction of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), H.R. 3080. We are excited about its potential here in Texas.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) applauds your efforts and the work of your staff in bringing forward fiscally sound legislation that will create jobs, spur economic development, provide for an expansion of international trade, and reform bureaucracy.

Some of the provisions that hold the most promise include:

- The Public Private Partnership (P3) Pilot Program. The State of Texas has had demonstrable success in using P3s for infrastructure projects and looks forward to seeing this important financial tool being available to help address the needs of our ports.
- Consolidation and elimination of duplicative studies and the requirement for concurrent reviews, including:
 - removal of a reconnaissance study prior to undertaking a feasibility study; and
 - vertical integration of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) review process.

OUR GOALS

MAINTAIN A SAFE SYSTEM • ADDRESS CONGESTION • CONNECT TEXAS COMMUNITIES • BEST IN CLASS STATE AGENCY

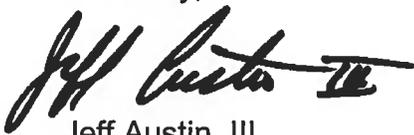
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- Instituting unambiguous caps on the length and cost of Corps feasibility studies.
- Allowing non-federal interests to contribute their own funds to advance studies and projects to the maximum extent practicable and expanding their ability to contribute funds to expedite the permitting process.
- Requiring a rule-making to establish new categorical exclusions and providing for categorical exclusions in the event of a major disaster or emergency.
- The steps taken toward requiring more money from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to go toward operation and maintenance activities.
- Authorization for channel improvement projects for the Sabine Neches Waterway and the Freeport Harbor Channel.

TxDOT also appreciates your efforts to ensure that WRRDA bills return to a two-year authorization cycle and the transparency measures and included in your legislation.

We look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead to advance the best WRRDA bill possible to the President's desk. Please feel free to contact me at (512) 463-1965 or your staff may contact Melanie Alvord in our Federal Affairs Office at (202) 434-0209.

Sincerely,



Jeff Austin, III
Commissioner
Texas Transportation Commission

cc: The Honorable Blake Farenthold
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
The Honorable Roger Williams
Eduardo Campirano, President, Texas Ports Association
John LaRue, Chair, TxDOT Ports Advisory Committee
Texas Transportation Commission
Phil Wilson, Executive Director, TxDOT
Dan Harmon, Director, Maritime Division, TxDOT
Coby Chase, Director, Federal Affairs, TxDOT
Melanie Alvord, Federal Affairs, TxDOT