

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

As representatives from the Commonwealth of Virginia, home to the Port of Virginia – one of the largest and busiest ports on the Eastern Seaboard – we write today concerning the Norfolk Harbor and Channels Widening and Deepening project and your FY22 budget request. We respectfully request that you include at least \$83.7 million in funding for the Norfolk Harbor project in your FY22 budget request to ensure this nationally significant project is able to move forward on schedule.

The Port of Virginia is one of the Commonwealth's most powerful economic engines. On an annual basis, the Port is responsible for more than 400,000 jobs and \$92 billion in spending across our Commonwealth and generates more than seven and a half percent of our Gross State Product. However, the Port's true reach extends throughout the Mid-Atlantic and into the Midwest and Ohio Valley. The Port maintains a balanced portfolio of container and bulk trade. U.S. exports comprise more than half of its container movements and serve a robust rail market to and from the American farmers and manufacturers throughout the Midwest and Ohio Valley.

The deepening and widening of Norfolk Harbor will ensure the continued safe and timely passage of larger commercial and military vessels through Norfolk Harbor. The rapid growth of larger vessels entering maritime trade makes it essential that this project proceed as quickly as possible. The public and private non-federal interests have invested billions of dollars on land-side infrastructure and are prepared to provide their cost share to complete this crucial navigation project in a timely manner. The importance of this project and its value to the nation is apparent, as Norfolk Harbor was the only navigation construction project with language supporting a New Start designation in the House of Representatives and Senate's respective Energy and Water Development Appropriations Committee reports last year.

Thanks to the cooperation between the Port of Virginia, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Norfolk District Office, and the rest of the Army Corps staff, construction on the first constructible element of the Norfolk Harbor project, deepening Thimble Shoal Channel – West, began in December 2019, 18 months ahead of schedule. Dredging of Thimble Shoal Channel – West is on target to reach 80 percent completion by the end of March 2021. A work package for the next constructible element, Thimble Shoal Channel – East deepening and widening, will be ready for advertisement at that point.

Regrettably, the congressionally authorized Federal share of this project has yet to be funded. While the Port has been able to use non-Federal funds to keep the project on schedule, any

further delay in Federal funding will delay the project and risk increasing costs. In order to maintain its schedule, the project requires a New Start designation and \$83.7 million in Federal construction funding in FY22 to fully fund the Inner Harbor contract and match the non-Federal cost share already obligated on the Thimble Shoal West contract. The Work Package for the Inner Harbor will be ready as soon as Federal funds are available, as the Norfolk District was prepared to move forward in FY21.

The Port of Virginia is a commercial and economic engine for the United States and continues to play an integral role in American foreign and domestic commerce and trade. Federal investment into this project will allow the Port to remain a prominent economic hub for the nation and a key player in domestic and international trade by generating more than \$3.9 billion in net national economic development benefits.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mark R. Warner

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

/s/ Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

/s/ Robert J. Wittman

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

/s/ Gerald E. Connolly

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

/s/ H. Morgan Griffith

H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ A. Donald McEachin

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

/s/ Abigail D. Spanberger

Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

/s/ Elaine G. Luria

Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress

/s/ Ben Cline

Ben Cline
Member of Congress

/s/ Jennifer Wexton

Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

/s/ Bob Good

Bob Good
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Shalanda Young
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget

CC: The Honorable Taylor N. Ferrell
Acting Director
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works