

Legislative Committee & Port of Pittsburgh Commission Report – Scott Harshman (Port of Pittsburgh), Chair;  
Legislative Committee: Scott Harshman, Pat Kelly, and George Petrus

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:**

**1. Priorities:**

- Continue to support Upper Ohio River Navigation System & Lower Mon Projects
- Oppose additional taxation, tolling, and lockage fees
- Fully utilize and draw down funding from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund
- ***For navigation projects, like the Montgomery L/D project, identified as “funded to completion” with Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding, advocating that these projects should continue to be 100% funded from the General Treasury -- not cost-shared – and consistent with Congressional intent***

**2. Congressional Appropriations**

- Requests submitted to Congress for additional funding needed for the Lower Mon Project
- US House Appropriations Committee approved their bill on June 22<sup>nd</sup> that includes \$455 million for inland waterways construction and the US Senate Appropriations Committee passed their bill on July 20<sup>th</sup> that includes \$161 million for inland waterways
- Federal Fiscal Year 2024 began October 1<sup>st</sup>. Congress passed a short-term 45-day Continuing Resolution to keep the government funded through **November 17<sup>th</sup>** while Congress continues to work on appropriation bills. ***We need them to complete the FY24 appropriation bills, especially those that provide funding for the US Army Corps of Engineers’ Civil Works Program. A long-term CR is not good for the inland waterways’ infrastructure projects.***

**3. Water Resources Development Act of 2024**

- Both the House and Senate have started to work on next WRDA bill – priorities will be:
  - IIJA projects should be 100% federal funded (as highlighted in Section 1 above)
  - No further reduction in the Allegheny River’s existing Levels of Service classification by the US Army Corps of Engineers - ***See press release from Senator Casey attached***

**4. Next PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund Opportunity**

- PennDOT has begun accepting applications for the next round of funding for grants under the MTF Program with **applications due by 4pm on November 13<sup>th</sup>**. **Learn more here:** [PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund Manual](#)

**PORT OF PITTSBURGH COMMISSION:**

**1. United States Marine Highway Program**

- Expect next Marine Highway Notice Of Funding Opportunity in March 2024
- PortPitt will be holding a webinar on the Marine Highway Program and other grant programs sometime this Winter

**2. Future Events**

- WCI’s 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Waterways Symposium in New Orleans on November 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>
- Lunch & Learn in Brownsville on December 7<sup>th</sup> with tour of Heartland Fabrication
- US Army Corps’ Monongahela River Locks and Dam 3 Removal meetings on December 12<sup>th</sup> for the Navigation Stakeholders and also the general public.

END

## ***Casey Pushes to Increase, Diversify Flow of American-Made Goods Along Major Southwestern Pennsylvania Waterways***

NOVEMBER 03, 2023

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) sent a letter to key business leaders and elected officials in Southwestern Pennsylvania reaffirming his commitment to investing in the region’s river communities and economy and outlining his goals to promote their long-term success.

“Southwestern Pennsylvania’s waterways have been the bedrock of the region’s economy and carried the steel and coal that built and powered America for generations,” said Senator Casey. “I’ve long championed investments in our Commonwealth’s waterways and I will continue to advocate for policies that will keep them navigable and a preferred means of transport as we build a stronger economy for families here and across the Nation.”

Understanding the need for increased federal action to not only rehabilitate Pennsylvania’s river infrastructure but to counteract the gradual decline in its usage, Senator Casey voted to pass critical legislation, like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which delivered a historic \$857 million investment to replace the Montgomery Locks and Dam in Beaver County, enhancing Southwestern Pennsylvania’s ability to move goods through the region.

Additionally, Casey successfully advocated for the inclusion of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers as part of the U.S. Marine Highway System, which will open up new federal opportunities along the corridors that can benefit local Southwestern Pennsylvania communities, and has pushed for more federal action to increase demand for American-made products like iron, steel, cement, and gravel and incentivize the use of American-made steel and iron in production through the Inflation Reduction Act and IIJA.

Senator Casey’s plan to incentivize greater use of Southwestern Pennsylvania’s waterways and boost the region’s economy includes convening relevant industry and government stakeholders to promote waterway freight

diversification and economic development along the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela River Corridor; putting the region's energy communities—particularly those whose economies are or were dependent on the coal, oil, or natural gas energy sectors—at the front of the line for new energy and manufacturing investments spurred by the legislation Casey has passed in Congress; and stopping river communities from being sealed off from waterways networks by preventing decreases in lockage hours that would harm freight movement along the Allegheny River before new investments have time to take effect.

The Save the Allegheny River (STAR) Coalition is an alliance of stakeholders in Southwestern Pennsylvania seeking to improve and maintain the viability of the region's waterways that have historically been vital to the region's economic success.

The full text of the letter is below.

Dear Save the Allegheny River (STAR) Members:

Thank you for writing to me about the importance of keeping the Allegheny River navigable. I appreciate hearing from you all on this issue.

The three rivers that define the geography of Western Pennsylvania have also been pivotal for the region's economy throughout its history. For decades, the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers have carried coal and coke to steel plants in Allegheny County, which then ship steel along the Ohio River to sites across the Nation. These rivers have also moved other important materials like aggregates and chemicals that help build our infrastructure and power our economy.

Unfortunately, in recent years we have seen a decline in the usage of these rivers as a means of transporting raw materials and other goods. This reduction in traffic has a variety of negative impacts: an increase in the use of heavy trucks that damage roads and bridges, a reliance on more polluting forms of transportation, and economic decline in the river communities of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

As your Senator, I have long been a supporter of investing in our Commonwealth's waterways and the systems of locks and dams that keep them navigable. This includes passing the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which made a historic, \$857-million investment in the replacement of the Montgomery Lock and Dam. I was also proud to advocate for designating the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers as part of the U.S. Marine Highway System, a designation which they received earlier this year.

I also have pushed for federal action to increase demand for American-made products like iron, steel, cement, and gravel through policies like Buy America provisions in the IIJA and awarding tax credits to projects that use domestic content and 100 percent U.S. steel and iron through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) It is my hope that more demand for these goods means more production in Pennsylvania and more shipments along our waterways.

However, I understand that more federal support is needed to activate the waterways, including incentivizing the diversification of and general increase in freight movement along the rivers to ensure their viability in a twenty-first century economy. To that end, I have advocated and am currently advocating for three policies that I believe can be major boons for the Southwestern region and our Pennsylvania waterways.

The first of these is report language through the Senate Fiscal Year 2024 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill that would direct the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization “to convene relevant stakeholders to discuss waterway freight diversification and economic development in the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela River Corridor.” Given the increase in federal investments through legislation like the IIJA, the IRA, and the CHIPS and Science Act, there is tremendous opportunity for shippers to make use of the waterways, but we need to be proactive in ensuring that companies and developers are aware of what the waterways and the communities along them have to offer as a place to do business.

The second effort I’ve championed is a new tax credit that will put our Nation’s energy communities at the front of the line for new energy and manufacturing investments spurred by the legislation we have passed in Congress. As areas

whose economies are or were dependent on the coal, oil, or natural gas energy sectors, energy communities are places with strong histories of powering and providing for our Nation. I pushed to include these tax credits in the IRA because I believe these communities need to be at the front and center of our modern economy, just as they have been historically. The entire Southwestern Pennsylvania region qualifies as an energy community, which makes the area along the region's waterways an even better place for companies to grow.

Finally, Congress is currently in the process of drafting a biennial Water Resources Development Act, which dictates U.S. Army Corps of Engineers policy. As a part of this process, I requested language that would authorize a multi-purpose feasibility study to look at how we can balance both ecosystem restoration work and navigation along the Allegheny River. Additionally, I asked for language preventing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from reducing lockage hours along the Allegheny River until 12 months after the completion of the feasibility study. It is my hope that this language will prevent decreased lockage hours and decreased freight movement, providing the time needed for new investments to take root before premature reductions in levels of service seal communities off from the waterways network.

Please know that advocating for Pennsylvania's waterways is a top priority of mine, and that I will work with partners in both parties and both chambers of Congress to make progress on this issue.

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