

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2021

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon
55th Chief of Engineers and Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G. St. NW
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Lieutenant General Spellmon:

We ask that you provide the Upper Ohio Navigation Project with utmost consideration as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) develops its Work Plan for fiscal year 2021.

The three locks on the Upper Ohio River that are included in the Upper Ohio Navigation Project are the oldest of the entire Ohio River system. They are all more than 70 years old. The current condition of these locks is a state of critical structural and operational degradation. They are increasingly at risk of structural or operational failure that could halt navigation for a year or longer. This type of a major failure would effectively close the entire Port of Pittsburgh and would greatly impact the steel and energy industries that are essential to our national security and our regional economies in Western Pennsylvania, the Great Lakes Region, and beyond. In addition to impacting commercial freight, pool loss from a failure would affect municipal and industrial water intakes, recreation, and wildlife habitats in all of our districts.

This project through the Corps has received \$18 million in funding to date and has received strong bipartisan support from Members of Congress. The passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA 2020), further underscores Congress' commitment to our inland waterways, as the federal cost share for inland navigation projects was raised from 50 percent to 65 percent. In addition to the 2020 WRDA, the end-of-year omnibus package also provided appropriations for FY2021, including a New Start for an inland navigation project like the Upper Ohio Navigation Project.

We feel strongly that the Upper Ohio Navigation Project is the best candidate for this New Start. Other inland projects are focused on important capacity and environmental improvements. However, as you saw on your 2019 visit with Congressman Lamb and Congresswoman Kaptur, the dire condition of the locks and dams involved in the Upper Ohio Navigation Project could result in the complete stoppage of navigation, leading us to believe that this project deserves priority.

Thank you for your consideration as you complete the Work Plan, and we look forward to continuing to work with you and the Corps. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Conor Lamb
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson
Member of Congress



Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress