



# MARITIME EXCHANGE

for the Delaware River and Bay

*Leading the Way to Port Progress*

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April 11, 2019

The Honorable Christopher Coons  
127A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Permanent Fix for Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) Full Funding Problem**

Dear Senator Coons:

The current system to maintain our nation's ports is broken. This letter requests your support in enacting a comprehensive solution to remedy this situation by providing full use of annual HMT revenues while addressing tax fairness and cargo diversion problems.

A sustainable funding source for harbor maintenance in the U.S., while important to the health of our nation, is particularly critical to regional port complexes such as the one found on the Delaware River which has a main shipping channel of 110 miles from the sea to Fairless Hills. Making HMT revenues fully and automatically available to ports will result in the long-term sustainability of our nation's harbor maintenance needs and ensure that ports have a reliable financing system to support our country's leadership position as a world-class trading nation.

A comprehensive proposal to fix the HMT developed by the American Association of Port Authorities provides for 100 percent of taxes collected from shippers to our nation's seaport infrastructure and international competitiveness while providing no additional tax burden on the industry or taxpayers. Under this agreement, HMT revenues would automatically transfer to the Corps of Engineers.

The agreement further calls for full spending of prior-year Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund revenues according to a fair and equitable framework. It makes maintenance the highest priority, provides protections to address small port and regional port needs, provides increasing equity to large HMT donors, and acknowledges Congress's priority to provide support to energy transfer ports.

We urge you to enact a comprehensive solution to fix the HMT once and for all. A long-term funding solution for port maintenance is needed and would be good for not only Delaware River ports, but for our nation as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact me at 215-925-2615 or at [dennis.rochford@maritimedelriv.com](mailto:dennis.rochford@maritimedelriv.com) with questions or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Dennis Rochford  
President

cc: Lisa Hember