



MARITIME EXCHANGE
for the Delaware River and Bay
Leading the Way to Port Progress



May 21, 2018

The Honorable
Address
Washington, D.C. ZIP

Dear Senator/Representative :

Your support of funding for operations and maintenance of NOAA's Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS) over and above the administration's FY19 request is needed. We request that you seek an additional \$10 million for PORTS: \$2 million for system modernization and development and \$8 million for full federal maintenance of the system. The attached letter from the American Association of Port Authorities underscores this request.

We further request that you please contact members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies and advise them that you stand with port communities in support of this critical funding stream.

PORTS operations and maintenance has an unfortunate history of chronic underfunding, and the administration's FY19 request is unfortunately more of the same. This is particularly troublesome given PORTS' proven effect on the navigational safety and economic health of our nation's waterways. The overall reach of PORTS many capabilities is broad, and its importance on several fronts cannot be overstated.

PORTS is vital to our international competitiveness and a source of real-time information for mariners and pilots on specific channel conditions. As a decision support tool that improves safety, efficiency of maritime commerce, and coastal resource management through the integration of real-time environmental observations, forecasts, and other geospatial information, PORTS stands singular. Pilots, captains, and other mariners review and depend upon PORTS data prior to and during transits allowing decisions based on actual, not predicted, conditions that can affect the safety of life and the environment. This is particularly critical for the tristate region given that the Delaware is a tidal river.

Loss of PORTS on the Delaware River would harm our regional competitive standing and result in job loss and revenues. Navigational safety, mariner personal safety, incident prevention, and environmental protection would all suffer without PORTS. Of critical importance is PORTS ability to ensure that the Delaware Memorial Bridge, Cape May Lewes Ferry, and other critical infrastructure are not jeopardized due to spills, collisions, and allisions.

PORTS is also utilized and needed in the preparation for and response to natural and man-made disasters and vital for coastal resource protection, municipal and county waterway planning, and the monitoring of municipal drinking water resources.

Given these undeniable benefits provided by PORTS, \$10 million in additional funding seems a most reasonable request.

Thank you for your consideration of support.

Dennis Rochford
President
Maritime Exchange for the
Delaware River and Bay

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Sincerely,

Stuart Griffin
Chairman
Mariners Advisory Committee

chairman@macdelriv.com
215-465-8340

Jon Kemmerley
President
Pilots Association for the
Bay and River Delaware

kemmerley@delpilots.com
215-465-2856

cc: Lisa Hember, Vice President, Maritime Exchange
/Att.

May 3, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
and Related Agencies
SD-142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
c/o Allen Cutler

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
and Related Agencies
SH-125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
c/o Jennifer Eskra

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
and Related Agencies
H-310 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515
c/o Ashley Schiller

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
c/o Bob Bonner

RE: Funding Support for FY 2019 NOAA Programs

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Culberson, and Ranking Members Shaheen and Serrano:

The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) represents ports throughout the United States that enable our nation to connect with the global transportation system. We are writing in support of funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Navigation, Observations, and Positioning programs as Congress considers funding levels for FY 2019. We urge you to support these essential federal programs within NOAA's National Ocean Service as well as its marine weather forecasting capabilities, including the National Data Buoy Center of NOAA's National Weather Service. We also urge you to support operations and maintenance for NOAA's aging hydrographic fleet, and to ensure NOAA's current and future investments in new vessels including new hydrographic vessels.

One particular area of concern remains the chronic underfunding for operations and maintenance of NOAA's Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System or "PORTS." The Administration's FY 2019 request is again far short of meeting federal responsibilities. We seek an additional \$10 million for the PORTS program – \$2 million for system modernization and further development and \$8 million for full federal maintenance of the system – currently being inconsistently funded. This program is vital to the safe navigation of federal waters and channels and our international competitiveness. It is a vital source of real-time information available to mariners and pilots on specific channel conditions.

We appreciate your recognition of the critical importance of ports and their vital role in the U.S. transportation system and economy. Please let us know whenever AAPA and our member ports may be of any assistance.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Nagle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kurt Nagle
President & CEO