

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
202/463-5310

July 9, 2014

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, urges you to consider the following recommendations as the House prepares to consider H.R. 4923, the "Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015."

The Chamber supports full funding for the Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) Civil Works Program authorized in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014. WRRDA 2014 made smart reforms and long-overdue improvements to the marine transportation system by allowing ultimate full usage of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for its intended purposes; modifying the federal cost-share for the Olmsted Lock and Dam project, freeing up resources for other critical capital construction efforts along the inland waterways system; creating conditions for prioritization of projects and successful project delivery; and enhancing opportunities for private investment.

Additionally, the Chamber supports efforts to include a provision that would prohibit the Army Corps from using any funds to implement or administer any change to the definition of waters under the jurisdiction of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. Earlier this year the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps proposed the "waters of the United States" rule, which would expand that definition and negatively impact job creation and economic growth.

The Chamber also supports an amendment expected to be offered by Rep. Cassidy that would prevent the Department of Energy (DOE) from using appropriated funds to conduct long-term predictions of life cycle greenhouse gas emissions for natural gas exports in any public interest determination. All environmental reviews of natural gas export facilities rest solely with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. DOE's sole jurisdiction lies in considering the public interest of exporting the commodity and should not waste funds potentially delaying license application review in an effort beyond its jurisdiction.

The Chamber opposes any efforts to reduce funding for National Nuclear Security Administration's Mixed-Oxide (MOX) Fuel Facility at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site. This project is critical to honoring the United States' Plutonium Disposition Protocol and the advancement of domestic nuclear fuel production.

Lastly, the Chamber opposes efforts to add any provision similar to and including an amendment by Rep. Ellison that would prevent contractors found to have violated the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) from continuing to receive federal contracts. There is a sufficient process to take into account contractor compliance with a variety of workplace laws and requirements, including the FLSA, and which already lead to the suspension and debarment from federal contracting if the violations are recurring or severe. This amendment would ignore the existing process, impose draconian penalties for violations, and lead to many current contractors being debarred. This would ultimately result in job losses and major disruptions in supplying the federal government with necessary goods and services.

The Chamber appreciates your consideration of these recommendations as you consider H.R. 4923, the “Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" being the most prominent parts.

R. Bruce Josten