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September 18, 2017

Hon. Jack Bergman
Member of Congress
414 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative Bergman and Senator Stabenow:

I am writing on behalf of the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) to thank you for introducing the Soo Locks Modernization Act (H.R. 2806, S. 1308) and to convey our wholehearted support for this important legislation. The Soo Locks are vital for both our regional and national economies and ensuring their security and continued service to the Great Lakes maritime transportation system is a longstanding priority for the GLC. By authorizing funding for a new large lock, your legislation will safeguard our nation by providing resiliency in the event of an unexpected shutdown of the other locks at the Soo complex.

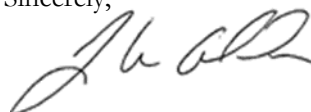
The Great Lakes maritime transportation system supports a \$5 trillion economy in our eight-state, two-province region. It links more than 100 U.S. and Canadian ports to the world economy, moves 181 million tons of cargo annually, generates more than 225,000 jobs and \$34 billion in business revenue, and supports industries such as manufacturing, steel production, agriculture and power generation. The system is vital for our national economy as well, with nearly 100 percent of the iron ore needed for U.S. steel production passing through the Soo Locks, which connect Lake Superior to the other four Great Lakes.

Currently, the vast majority of cargo moving through the Soo Locks is limited to the Poe Lock, the one large lock at the Soo complex. Our sole reliance on this single, 50-year old lock puts our regional and national economies at risk. For example, the Department of Homeland Security has projected that a six-month, unplanned closure of the Poe Lock would result in a nearly complete shutdown of regional steel production, 11 million job losses, a severe recession, and a \$1.1 trillion decrease in national GDP.

Planning has been underway for three decades to build a new large lock to provide needed capacity and resiliency. A recent Treasury Department report identified a new Soo lock as one of 40 infrastructure projects of major economic significance for the nation. The study put the project's benefit-cost ratio at 2.0-4.0 – well above the level required to be included in the Administration's budget – and projected a net economic benefit of up to \$1.7 billion. Now is the time to move forward with this important infrastructure project and we endorse your legislation and call for its passage by Congress.

We thank you for your leadership in sponsoring this important legislation and look forward to working with you to secure its passage. If you have questions, please contact the GLC's Interim Executive Director, Tom Crane (734-971-9135, tcrane@glc.org).

Sincerely,



Jon W. Allan, Chair

Cc: Members of the House and Senate Great Lakes Delegation