

Background:

Our nation's seaports and harbors are gateways to domestic and international trade. More than 90 percent of the U.S. foreign trade moves through our nation's 300 seaports, representing 25 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. In Florida alone, this waterborne trade represents \$149 billion in international trade and generates more than 680,000 direct and indirect jobs. Congress has developed a few programs to address freight development, but these existing programs do not adequately address U.S. needs for freight infrastructure. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, there is a \$15.8 billion deficit in necessary investment in port infrastructure to reduce costs on U.S. businesses and consumers and to improve our global competitive position.

Current Issue:

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Program was created by Congress in 2009 to authorize the U.S. Department of Transportation to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. This program remains one of the few federal programs investing in port related infrastructure.

The *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act* (MAP-21) establishes a framework for moving forward with a National Freight Policy and supporting programs. We commend Congress for creating this foundation.

We also commend Congress for including additional funding for Army Corps of Engineers projects in the FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which provides additional funding for Army Corps projects, programs and activities (PPAs), in addition to the funding designated to specific budgeted PPAs in the legislation.

Recommendations:

The Florida Ports Council recommends that Congress **provide funding for the Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS) program** in MAP-21. Congress should also expand the criteria in that program to include seaport projects.

Because TIGER is one of the few programs to invest in port related infrastructure, we recommend that **at least 25% of TIGER grants should be awarded to port-related infrastructure** projects.

The Florida Ports Council recommends that Congressional Appropriations Committees **continue the practice of providing additional funds as they prepare the Fiscal Year 2015 spending legislation for the Army Corps of Engineers**. This is especially important as the FY 2015 Army Corps budget, as submitted to Congress in March 2014, reflects a 5.8 percent decrease from FY 2014 budget.

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