



July 22, 2020

Mark Pointon
Designated Federal Officer
Inland Waterways Users Board
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE. W21-307
Washington, DC 20590.

Dear Mr. Pointon,

Inland Rivers Ports & Terminals, Inc. (IRPT) writes to request that the Committee advise the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, through the Maritime Administrator, of the Committee's support for private terminal eligibility for federal funding opportunities independent of a public sponsor.

IRPT advocates this stronger support of the inland waterways since the economic development along those inland waterways, i.e. the commercially navigable rivers, could not be created by any other means than via our ports and terminals along those waterways.

Comments made on today's call:

"I wanted to comment about strengthening communications between the Corps of Engineers and industry. Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals has a mobile app that went online the 1st of March. This service is being provided free for anyone who wants to download it. We push navigation notices from the Corps, US Coast Guard, and Emergency Response Teams on the different navigation systems. We have pushed almost 500 notifications so far.

I was notified by one of our members last Friday about the LaGrange L & D closure being extended, but there was nothing on the USACE Headquarters Nav Notice website (NTN1) regarding the extension. There was, however, a log that lists all open notices regarding the Illinois Waterway that was posted on July 20th as an attachment for a mechanical dredging project, and it did not show the extended closure for LaGrange.

I looked on the District's website to see if the changes were showing and they were not. I ended up calling the Lockmaster at LaGrange L & D to confirm that the information I received was accurate.

IRPT has been diligent in making sure we are promptly notifying industry who rely on these vital navigation systems regarding any disruptions that affect important decisions that impact the movement of commodities on our inland rivers.

It is important for USACE, in all Districts, to be inclusive when notifying changes to closures, emergency situations like floods, or any impacts to the systems.

USACE personnel, as Assistant Secretary James stated, are partners to industry. IRPT is trying to provide a high level of communication between USACE and navigational interests. In order for the users of our mobile app to trust they are being kept apprised of up-to-date information, it is imperative that information flows freely and expediently, especially information that constricts the natural flow of commerce."

Inland Marine Highways, that is, the inland rivers, move commerce to and from 38 states throughout our nation's heartland; they serve as transport ramps to industrial and agricultural centers; and they facilitate imports and exports at gateway ports on the Coasts. Our nation's rivers deliver vital goods between major gateway ports, establish new trade networks with significant public benefits and create a foundation for future trade growth.

IRPT is a non-profit trade association with over 300 members nationwide. IRPT advocates for the inland waterways, industries and companies that serve and utilize our inland rivers, ports and terminals. IRPT promotes the use of our nation's rivers as the most cost effective, and environmentally friendly form of transportation. Our Members consist of public ports, private terminals, barge and rail operators, waterway associations, shippers, and firms.

IRPT truly thanks you for your consideration in advising the U.S. Secretary of Transportation through the Maritime Administrator to allow private terminal eligibility for federal funding opportunities independent of a public sponsor.

Sincerely,

Dede Smith

Dede Smith, IMPE
Deputy Director

Cc: Robert Innis, Chairman
Michael Monahan, Vice Chairman
David Earl, Member
Mike Fewell, Member
Damon Judd, Member
W. Spencer Murphy, Member
Dennis Oakley, Member
Timothy C. Power, Member
Robert Rich, Member
Matthew Ricketts, Member
Jeff Webb, Member