

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 9, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

As representatives from the Commonwealth of Virginia, home to the Port of Virginia – the fifth largest and fastest growing port in the nation – we write today concerning the Norfolk Harbor and Channels Widening and Deepening project and your Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) budget request. We respectfully request that you include \$76.9 million in funding for the Norfolk Harbor project in your FY23 budget request to ensure this nationally significant project continues to move forward on schedule.

The Port of Virginia is one of the Commonwealth's most powerful economic engines. On an annual basis, the Port is responsible for more than 400,000 jobs and \$100 billion in spending across our Commonwealth and generates more than eight percent of our Gross State Product. However, the Port's true reach extends throughout the Mid-Atlantic and into the Midwest and Ohio Valley. The Port maintains a balanced portfolio of container and bulk trade, and it serves a robust rail market to and from the American farmers and manufacturers throughout the Midwest and Ohio Valley.

The deepening and widening of Norfolk Harbor is essential to continue safe and timely passage of ever-increasing commercial and military vessels through the harbor. Deepening Norfolk Harbor to 55 feet from its current 50 feet depth and widening Thimble Shoal Channel to 1,400 feet will enable safe, two-way traffic in and out of the harbor and will help prevent delays to commercial and military vessels – a necessity in today's global trading landscape. Expanding Norfolk Harbor to allow for two-way traffic will also help prevent backlogs of commercial vessels that could cause costly delays and supply chain disruptions that are currently affecting some port facilities across the U.S.

We are pleased that the Norfolk Harbor project recently received a New Start designation. As the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations process continues, the additional \$83.7 million, which was originally included in the President's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget request and has been carried forward in both the House and Senate's Fiscal Year 2022 Energy and Water Appropriations bills, will allow the Norfolk District to advertise the Atlantic Ocean Channel segment this summer.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provided full funding of \$20 million for Preconstruction Engineering and Design and \$330 million for construction in its FY19-20 biennial budget. The deepening of Thimble Shoal Channel – West as well as the deepening and widening of Thimble Shoal Channel – East are both currently under construction with scheduled completion by

August 2022. Both contracts are funded and administered by the Port and are in full compliance with Federal standards under a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in July 2017. Further, the construction work is eligible as Work-In-Kind once a Project Partnership Agreement is signed, which may happen as soon as this month now that Federal funds have been received.

However, a recent USACE cost estimate update and approval of the previously authorized widening of Thimble Shoal Channel – West as a cost-shared element of the project have increased the projected Federal share of the project to \$235.9 million. Allocating the remaining \$76.9 million of the Federal share to Norfolk Harbor in Fiscal Year 2023 is essential to keep this nationally significant project on track for completion by early 2025 and allow the Norfolk District to award the Inner Harbor segment in a timely manner.

The Port of Virginia is a commercial and economic engine for the United States and continues to play an integral role in American foreign and domestic commerce and trade. Completion of this project will allow the Port to remain a prominent economic hub for the nation and a key player in domestic and international trade by generating more than \$3.9 billion in net national economic development benefits.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding this request. We look forward to continue working with you to support this critical project for Virginia and our nation's ports.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
U.S. Senator



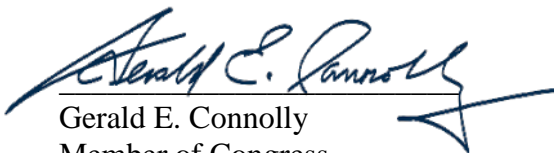
Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator



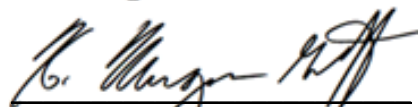
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



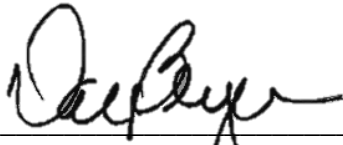
Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



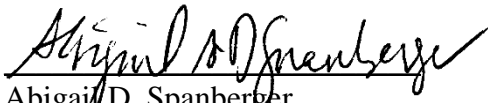
H. Morgan Griffith
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Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress



Ben Cline
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Bob Good
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Shalanda Young
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

CC: The Honorable Michael L. Connor
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314