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**AGC of America**  
THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA  
**Quality People. Quality Projects.**



November 18, 2009

The Honorable Jason Altmire  
332 Cannon House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Considerations for the Next Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)

Dear Representative Altmire:

On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of America, the leading trade association for the construction industry, representing more than 33,000 firms, including 7,000 of America's leading general contractors and over 12,000 specialty-contracting firms in all 50 states, I respectfully urge you to consider the following as the Congress begins to work on a new Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

AGC believes first and foremost that a WRDA bill should be enacted on time and on schedule. WRDA reaffirms the government's pledge to authorize, modify, and improve projects, programs, and policies protecting the nation from floods and keeping our waterways open to navigation. Congress passed the last WRDA in 2007 and that was a critically important step towards expanding and modernizing the nation's water resources infrastructure. Regularly enacted WRDA authorizations fulfill these important missions.

Waterways programs foster economic development, facilitate trade and commerce, aid international competitiveness, stimulate employment, provide water recreation opportunities, enhance agricultural and industrial productivity, and augment our national defense. Historically, such programs have had numerous benefits - Flood damage reduction projects alone have prevented an estimated \$706 billion in damages - an eight-to-one return on the Federal government's investment; and Operations and Maintenance work provides an average of \$14.10 return for every dollar invested. In the Mississippi Valley and Tributary System, more than \$24 in damages is saved for each dollar spent.

Finally, consider that the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) and Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) were established in 1986 to fund the operation and maintenance of Federal ports and harbors. Since 2002, there has been a growing gap between the annual amount of HMT collected and the annual amount of appropriations from the HMTF. Enough HMT is collected each year to meet all of the nation's authorized harbor maintenance needs, but only a little more than half of it is appropriated for harbor maintenance. Congress should enact legislation setting the obligation limitation each year equal to projected revenues in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. It is vital that this principal be included in the next WRDA bill.

We appreciate the challenging process that the Committee is undertaking and offer our assistance as the process moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marco A. Giamberardino'.

Marco A. Giamberardino  
Senior Director, Federal and Heavy Construction Division