

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND POWER

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COMMERCE, MANUFACTURING AND TRADE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

August 10, 2012

Ms. Jo Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary for Civil Works
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Pentagon, Room 3E446
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Secretary Darcy,

On July 17, 2012, officials from the Pittsburgh District of the Army Corps of Engineers held a public meeting in Morgantown, WV to discuss the future of the Upper Monongahela River and potential reductions in service of the Hildebrand, Morgantown and Opekiska locks.

It is our understanding that the Corps will be seeking to reduce significantly or eliminate regular service for many locks throughout the country under the Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Levels of Service Guide, March 2012. The locks on the Upper Monongahela River and its tributaries play a significant role in our state's economy. Everything from the local recreational boater to the commercial coal barge depends on the river.

We are aware the IMTS guidelines allow for exceptions. We hope that you would consider giving the Upper Monongahela locks mentioned above such an exemption while you continue to work with the affected West Virginia communities and organizations to explore alternative and innovative ways to keep the locks open.

Maintaining fiscal responsibility and ensuring that every dollar is spent wisely is very important to all us; but, we also must weigh the costs and the benefits and ensure that long term harm is not caused. Without use of the Upper Monongahela River for business and recreation, it will drive away investments from an area of the country that is growing with energy production and the high technology industry.

With that being said, please provide a cost estimate of keeping the Opekiska and Hildebrand locks open forty-five days during the summer season, and the Morgantown lock kept open on a full-time basis. Additionally, please provide an annual cost estimate for the maintenance of each of the three locks aforementioned, and in the interim we request a meeting with you in our Washington, D.C. office to discuss this situation further. Please contact Cory Toth of my staff if you have any questions at 202-225-4172 or cory.toth@mail.house.gov.

We look forward to working together with you on this matter and would appreciate your earliest reply.

Respectfully,



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress

DBM/CAT