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Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 27, 2001

Brigadier General Stephen M. Rhoades
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
North Atlantic Division
Ft. Hamilton Military Community
General Lee Ave., Bldg. 301, First Flr.
Brooklyn, New York 11252-6700

Dear Brigadier General Rhoades:

On Wednesday, June 20th, members of the Maryland congressional delegation received a briefing from the Corps of Engineers pertaining to the status of various channel improvement projects related to the Port of Baltimore. Following up on that briefing, we are writing to express our strong, continued support for the implementation of these projects.

As one of the largest seaports on the East Coast of the U.S., the Port of Baltimore is a vital part of our nation's commercial transportation system and of our economy. It is a substantial contributor to Maryland's economic activity, generating nearly \$1.3 billion in economic benefits, an estimated 127,000 port-related jobs, and more than \$500 million a year in State and local tax revenues and customs receipts. Ensuring that the Port remains competitive and healthy is critical to keeping America and Maryland's economy growing and that requires maintaining and improving the Port's shipping channels.

We ask for your support in moving forward in a timely manner with the Baltimore Harbor Anchorages and Channels project by expediting the approvals of the Limited Re-Evaluation Report (LRR) and the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA). It is our understanding that with the exception of these final approvals, the project has received all other necessary Corps approvals, including the Chief's Report, which was issued in June 1998.

This project will provide important safety and operating efficiency improvements for the port. We have consistently supported efforts to move this project forward, as evidenced by our work related to its authorization in the Water Resources Development Act of 1999, and our effort to fund the project, including the appropriation of \$3 million in the FY 2001 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill and the \$8 million budgeted in the President's FY 2002 budget.

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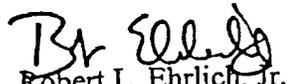
A Limited Re-Evaluation Report (LRR) is presently being prepared on the project by the Baltimore District. It is our understanding that, contingent upon the timely review of the LRR by appropriate levels of the Corps, the District could begin work in the Fall of 2001. It is our hope that the Corps will take all available steps, consistent with its established approval processes, including expedited and concurrent reviews, to allow construction to start in October 2001.

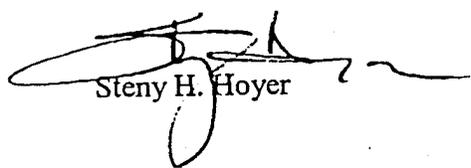
We thank you for all your efforts for the State of Maryland and the Port of Baltimore.

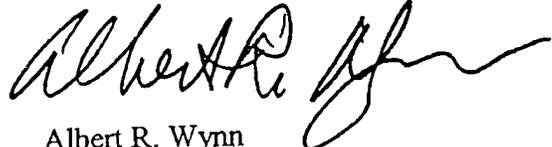
Sincerely,


Elijah E. Cummings


Benjamin L. Cardin


Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.


Steny H. Hoyer


Albert R. Wynn