

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 12, 2007

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Mica
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

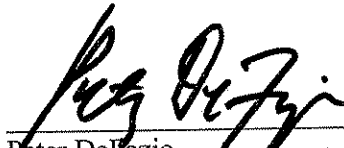
We are writing to urge your support for language included in both the House and Senate versions of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 1495) that would remove operating restrictions from the federal west coast hopper dredges *Essayons* and *Yaquina*. By removing the current restrictions on the annual number of days the *Essayons* and *Yaquina* may work, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be able to more fully utilize these federal resources in the manner most beneficial to and cost-effective for the taxpayers of the United States, and maintain and improve the ports, harbors, and channels of the Pacific coast.

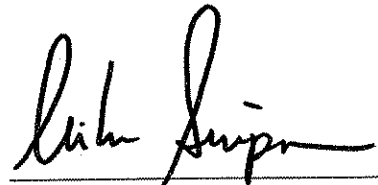
West coast ports depend on the federal dredge fleet to maintain federally authorized channels and harbors. Federal policy currently imposes artificial and arbitrary limits on the number of days per year these federal dredges may work. This has led to circumstances where authorized channel depths have not been maintained.


Several studies have been completed with regard to these dredges, including a GAO study (GAO-03-382). The GAO found that restrictions on the use of the Corps' hopper dredge fleet have imposed costs on the Corps' dredging program, but have thus far not resulted in proven benefits. The study also found that since the implementation of restrictions on the federal dredges, the number of private firms has decreased, the number of contractor bids per Corps solicitation has decreased, and the number of bids exceeding Corps estimates has increased.

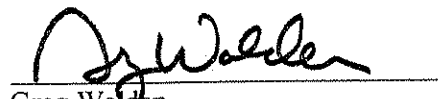
As you work to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of the Water Resources Development Act, we strongly encourage you to preserve the matching language in the House and Senate versions of WRDA, and remove the artificial operating restrictions from the *Essayons* and *Yaquina*.

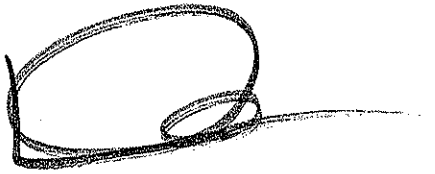
Sincerely,


Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

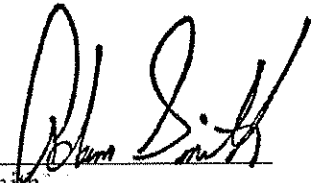

Mike Simpson
Member of Congress


Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

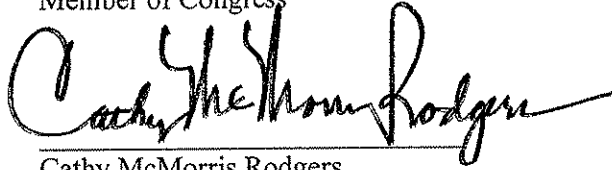

Greg Walden
Member of Congress



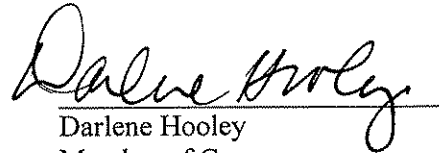
David Wu
Member of Congress



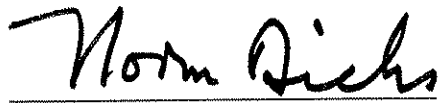
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



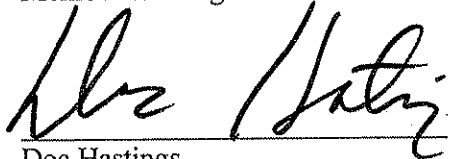
Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress



Norm Dicks
Member of Congress



Bill Sali
Member of Congress



Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



Brian Baird
Member of Congress