

# P R E S S   R E L E A S E



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## **PORT OF SOUTH LOUISIANA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ADDRESSES NAVIGATION CHANNEL ISSUES BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

New Orleans, LA

In an effort to secure funding for navigation channel maintenance, Port of South Louisiana Executive Director Paul Aucoin participated in a Congressional Roundtable before the United States Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on Friday, November 13, 2015. At the request of Congressman Graves, the meeting was held in New Orleans at the Louisiana State Supreme Court and the discussion focused on “The Importance of Port, Waterway, Flood Control & Ecosystem Restoration Improvements to the Nation’s Economy: Concepts for the Next Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)”. Following passage of WRDA 2014, Congress made a commitment to passing a WRDA Bill every two years to fund critical infrastructure projects. By holding the Roundtable, the Committee and area leaders highlighted current issues facing Southeast Louisiana and the need to include them in the 2016 WRDA Bill.

Seaports deliver vital goods, provide essential services, create critical jobs, and support local and national economic growth. United States’ seaports generate nearly \$4.6 trillion in total economic activity and more than \$321 billion in federal, state, and local taxes, an amazing return on the roughly \$2 billion annual Federal appropriations for navigation channel construction and maintenance. International trade accounts for more than a quarter of the nation’s GDP, allowing America’s seaports to support 13 million high-paying jobs.

Aucoin, who appeared on behalf of the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), stressed the importance of maintaining and constructing the nation’s maritime infrastructure to economic growth, which depends on the movement of goods through ports to and from the global marketplace. For all the effort put forth by ports to encourage port facility investment, the nation’s economic future is at risk due to insufficient Federal investment for essential maritime infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

The Mississippi River, one of America’s greatest natural resources, is experiencing high flows and sediment loads, which highlights maintenance dredging problems. Vessels transporting goods to and from the Port of South Louisiana have had to navigate with channel depth and width restrictions from March through August of this year. “Full use of the WRRDA’s Harbor Maintenance Tax revenues would provide the estimated \$70 million per year needed to fully maintain the main river channel and perform dredging of South Pass and other navigation work that has been deferred annually since 2007,” Aucoin emphasized. “This channel improvement will enable ports along the Mississippi River to accommodate the global trend of larger ships, thus keeping us world-class.”

Aucoin also stressed the River Region's dire need of flood protection levees and flood control and the importance of coastal restoration in the protection of not only the ecosystem but also of life and property during severe weather events.

Following the meeting, committee members received a first-hand look at the target area through a flyover of Southeast Louisiana. Committee members expressed appreciation for the information provided and the impact it will have on their decision-making for funding.

Other roundtable panelists included: Kyle Graham, Executive Director, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Natalie Robottom, St. John the Baptist Parish President, Bob Turner, Regional Director, Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority East; on behalf of the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, Amy Larson, President, National Waterways Conference, Matt Woodruff, Director Public & Government Affairs Kirby Corporation; on behalf of Waterways Council, Inc. and Michael Hecht, President and CEO, Greater New Orleans, Inc.



*Paul Aucoin (center) addressing the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment*

### **About the Port of South Louisiana**

The Port of South Louisiana is a 54-mile port district on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, encompassing the parishes of St. Charles, St. John and St. James. The facilities located within the port's district consistently handle over a quarter billion short tons of cargo annually, ranking it the largest tonnage port district in the Western Hemisphere, the nation's greatest grain exporter, and the number one energy transfer port in the United States. Along the 108 miles of deep-water frontage on both banks of the river there are seven grain

transfer facilities, four major oil refineries, 11 petrochemical manufacturing facilities and several other facilities for a total of more than 50 docks owned and operated by an impressive group of resident tenants such as ADM, ArcelorMittal, Dow, Cargill, DuPont, Motiva Enterprises, Marathon, Shell, Nucor Steel., Occidental, and Occidental Chemical To learn more, visit us at [www.portsl.com](http://www.portsl.com), like us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

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