

P R E S S R E L E A S E



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FORBES MAGAZINE PUBLISHES OP-ED BY AUCOIN AND DUFFY URGING TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO BE BOLD ON INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Forbes Magazine recently published an opinion piece co-signed by Paul Aucoin, the executive director of the Port of South Louisiana and Sean Duffy, the executive director of the Big River Coalition, that calls on the Trump administration to implement a bold infrastructure plan that includes funding to help dredge the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Forbes

February 17, 2017

Channeling A Bold Trump Infrastructure Plan

By Paul Aucoin and Sean Duffy

Of the ten states that border the main stem of the Mississippi River, Donald Trump won eight. Of the 31 states that use the river and its tributaries to export goods across the globe, Trump carried all but a handful. His appeal to many of those voters was his promise to restore economic vitality to the American heartland.

The media has generally portrayed the revitalization of Middle America as the return of manufacturing. However, the bedrock of rural economies is often agriculture. Profitable farms keep everyone in business, from the local diner to the tractor dealer. Unfortunately, that agricultural financial engine is in jeopardy.

This is because where the Mississippi River meets the Gulf of Mexico, the shipping channel used by over 6,000 cargo ships every year—that export grain around the world, produced by farmers up and down the river—is often clogged with mud and silt. The solution is dredging that shipping channel. But, Congress has been unable to provide adequate funding.

Businesses that rely on the Mississippi River to ship their goods across the globe are hopeful that Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure plan will help provide enough resources to dredge this artery of trade.

Stephen Bannon, the president's chief strategist, is pushing for this type of infrastructure build-up. He recently stated: "With negative interest rates throughout the world, it's the greatest opportunity to rebuild everything." If the money is spent wisely on projects that create jobs, it may be one of Trump's most lasting contributions to the economic vitality of the nation.

Consider the financial and employment impacts of dredging the Mississippi River. For instance, every year, over 4,500 cargo ships pass through the Port of South Louisiana. When the channel is not deep enough, each ship has to operate with about 5 feet less of cargo. Each foot of cargo equates to a loss of around \$1 million. Spread those losses over thousands of ships, and buying American grains like corn, soy and wheat becomes more expensive and less profitable when exported through the port's seven grain elevators. Eventually, nations around the globe that import millions of tons of American grains may choose to get their food elsewhere. The same problem applies to the 57 manufacturing industries in the Port of South Louisiana that count on a reliable deepwater port.

This possibility becomes more likely as new, massive ships—which depend on deepwater ports to maximize their profits—exit the recently enlarged Panama Canal. Those cargo ships could turn south, not north, and get their grains from countries like Argentina.

Ensuring the reliability of the Mississippi River will also attract overseas investment in the United States. At the Port of South Louisiana, there is currently almost \$15 billion being invested by foreign companies and nations. This massive commitment to Louisiana will create thousands of good jobs, the average paying over \$60,000 per year. Putting those jobs in jeopardy because we cannot maintain the mouth of the Mississippi River would be a travesty.

We are also asking the president to work with Democrats who want to invest in our infrastructure. Currently, Congressman Peter DeFazio, an Oregon Democrat, is urging the Trump administration to ensure that the \$9 billion surplus from the Harbor Maintenance Tax is dedicated to the intended purposes for channel maintenance. Fixing this glitch would go a long way to restoring America's waterways.

To end on a positive note, there is good news: The White House has released a List of Emergency and National Security Projects that focuses on critical infrastructure and has listed deepening the Mississippi River Ship Channel as the seventh most important project in the United States. We are confident that President Trump and Congress will come together to get a bipartisan infrastructure bill that helps rebuild America. We need an infrastructure plan that will protect good jobs, ensure our farmers continue to thrive and put millions of Americans back to work on rebuilding crumbling roads, schools and other important projects.

Link:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2017/02/17/channeling-a-bold-trump-infrastructure-plan/#456526d87ae8>

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, Valero, and Occidental Chemical. To learn more, visit us at www.portsl.com, like us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

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