



CORBA

Central Ohio River Business Association

February 13, 2020

Dear CORBA Members,

We are pleased to share a recent accomplishment resulting from CORBA's and OKI's long-standing partnership. At today's CORBA Member meeting, Tim Pickering, Acting Director of the Office of Ports & Waterways Planning for USDOT's Maritime Administration (MARAD), announced the designation of a Marine Highway Project that encompasses and benefits our Ports of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. USDOT Secretary Elaine Chao approved this designation, which is only the 35th such Marine Highway Project Designation in the country.

America's Marine Highways are navigable waterways designated by the Secretary of Transportation due to their demonstrated ability to provide additional capacity and relieve congested freight and passenger land routes. Each marine highway has a corridor designation that reflects the congested landside route it parallels. In our case, the M-70 for Interstate 70.

Designated Marine Highway Projects have been recognized by the Secretary of Transportation as having the ability to create new marine highway services or expand existing services. Designated Projects receive preferential treatment from USDOT and MARAD for federal funding. In Fiscal Year 2019, Congress appropriated \$7 million for Marine Highway Projects. Although this may seem like a small investment, 65% of the applications submitted have been approved since the program's inception in 2010. Mr. Pickering announced that the next round of funding applications is expected to open next month. In addition to possible funding assistance, the Office of Marine Highways may provide other support services.

Our project designation was obtained through an application process in which OKI served as the public sponsoring agency. For many years, OKI has recognized the critical importance of freight transportation to our economy and prioritized it in the region's planning and investments. OKI and CORBA have held a common focus to expand our relationships with our public and private partners. Our partners have the shared goal of highlighting the underutilized freight transportation capacity available on the Ohio River to support regional economic growth, promote a better quality of life, protect the environment and make transportation safer for residents and visitors.

On behalf of CORBA and OKI, we are confident that our Marine Highway Project Designation will play an instrumental role in furthering this mission. The hope is that this designation will lead to partnerships with local ports and terminal operators to identify new applications for the marine highway system; including local advanced manufacturers, barge lines, shipping container logistics managers, local governments and the U.S. Army.

We look forward to CORBA and OKI's continued partnership with USDOT, our state DOTs and other stakeholders, as we continue to work together to advance our region as a global economic leader.

Scott James, Cincinnati Bulk Terminals & Mark Policinski, OKI