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November 27, 2019

COL. Steven M. Sattinger  
Commander & District Engineer  
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District  
Clock Tower Building  
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004

Via email: [Steven.M.Sattinger@usace.army.mil](mailto:Steven.M.Sattinger@usace.army.mil)

Dear Colonel Sattinger,

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) writes to convey support for the establishment of port statistical areas, to collect consolidated data regarding waterway freight terminal volumes and vessel activities. We provide this expression of enthusiasm for the proposed methodology, being advanced by the Bi-state Regional Commission as the applicant, and recognize that support based on as accurate an accounting of traffic activities as is practical for the facilities across defined geographies can serve to underpin and advance economic development more broadly. In turn, support for and from communities along the waterways, as well as those proximate to the rivers of the Rock Island District, and beyond, will be more able to recognize the intrinsic value of the regional and national waterways that serve as origins and destinations for the waterborne freight that is loaded and unloaded throughout the area.

To be more specific, ISA encourages the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to establish new port statistical areas for freight movements to, from, and between terminals that can be collectively documented, within the proposed geographies, to be designated as:

- Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI)
- Illinois Waterway Ports and Terminals (IWPT)
- Mid-America Port.

Data collection and consolidation of the information will represent these designated ports areas in a contemporary approach supporting regional logistics. The movement and tracking of commodities such as soybeans, tracking other categories of freight within agriculture industry and in other sectors, shows promise for bringing a fact-based approach to highlight operations throughout port statistical areas. The approach has been described as practical and viable, prompting our endorsement of the data segmentation and consolidation. In the past, projects such as this have been able to characterize regional freight volumes. Future research in support of investments, operations, and planning would be undertaken based on such time series information. The data can be expected to be used effectively for assessing and addressing important commercial challenges and opportunities. Those solutions can lead to developments for the benefit of both the private and the public sectors.

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In the course of an evaluation of the port statistical area, ISA recognizes that several regions within the District's area of responsibility would benefit from formal designation as a stretch of area specified to encourage development and establishment of a statistical area along the rivers of the District. The preview and initial analysis the Army Corps will expectedly include both multimodal and future intermodal transportation operations. As well, the value of integration, using common tonnage and value, whether explicit or estimated, may eventually enable the envisioned utility of distributed ledger technologies, commonly known as blockchain data components, that will likely be advanced with additional programmatic support in the future.

This letter provides an indication of market interest, validating and encouraging technical support for the proposed Army Corps innovation, adding meaningful credibility to the proposed effort. Letters of support such as this one help to demonstrate that MRPEIWI, the Illinois Waterway Ports and Terminals, as well as MidAmerica Port region will foster dialogue among relevant stakeholders, who are potential beneficiaries of federal funding programs, along with end users, waterway operators, strategic partners and even investors for developing cargo movements. A set of legitimate business opportunities may exist in the course of data categorizations proving feasible.

On behalf of ISA, we reconfirm that we are giving enthusiastic support to establishing new port statistical areas. We are optimistic that an Army Corps commitment to this updated data collection and reporting will be predicated on your base of past and present stakeholder support. We envision the dataset will help the region in the realms of navigation, flood risk management and environmental stewardship. We highly commend your consideration of the approach. Please convey ISA support to Mississippi Valley Division leadership and to Army Corps of Engineers headquarters. We look forward to hearing about future successful refinements, validation and improvements that in turn will support the nation, among which includes Illinois soy farmers' competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Sincerely,

Mark Albertson  
Interim-CEO and Director, Strategic Marketing Development  
Illinois Soybean Association

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