January 31, 2020

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite

Chief of Engineers and Commanding General

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

441 G Street, NW

Washington, DC 20314

Dear Lieutenant General Semonite:

We write to follow up on our January 9, 2020 letter requesting the United States Army Corps (Corps) include funding in the (FY) 2020 work plan for dredging to properly maintain the infrastructure of Holland Harbor. We have recently been made aware of two critical factors that further underscore the need for these dredging funds this year.

With water levels in the Great Lakes at record highs, the need for erosion protection is great. To that end, Holland Harbor has brought in over 63,000 tons of stone from Wisconsin by water for Lake Michigan shoreline erosion protection. About 20,000 tons of that was loaded back onto smaller barges and shipped to the projects by water. This stone – which represents a value of $3.5 to $4 million – will be used to protect over 16,000 lineal feet of shoreline from Whitehall to New Buffalo. Stone of this size, quality, and quantity is not available in Michigan at this time.

If Holland Harbor does not receive dredging funds in the 2020 work plan, it is likely that this material needed for critical erosion protection will need to be trucked directly from the quarry, an action that would increase costs by close to $2 million.

Additionally, the Corps performed a condition survey of Holland Harbor on January 29, 2020 to determine the effects of the fall and winter wave/wind action to date on the harbor. In August, shortly following the summer 2019 dredging activity, the harbor (which has a project depth of 23 feet in the entrance) showed depths of 25 feet. In just five months, the entrance of Holland Harbor has experienced considerable shoaling and now shows depths as low as 17 feet in places. To experience a shoaling of eight feet in areas, in only five months, with more likely to occur this winter and spring, leaves this harbor in a precarious position for 2020.

Holland Harbor is a deep draft commercial harbor and major receiving port on the Great Lakes. In order to continue receiving commercial traffic, including stone for critical erosion protection and crucial infrastructure materials by water, it is imperative that Holland Harbor be included in the (FY) 2020 work plan for dredging. We urge the Corps to make this action so that dredging will be effective for this year.

Thank you for your consideration.

 Sincerely,

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Bill Huizenga Fred Upton
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