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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2012

USACE IWR Begins U.S. Port and Inland Waterways Modernization Study: Options for the Future

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. USACE Headquarters (HQ) and the Institute for Water Resources (IWR) have begun work to develop a strategy of options for U.S. port and inland waterways modernization. The Panama Canal expansion that is currently underway will almost triple the size of container vessels able to transit the canal, which will affect trade to the U.S., especially along the east and Gulf coasts.

Upon the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 on December 23rd 2011, USACE HQ began working with IWR on the scoping of the "U.S. Port and Inland Waterways Modernization Strategy: Options for the Future". The strategy will explore the impacts of the Panama Canal expansion to accommodate larger "post-Panamax" ships on future marine transportation system needs. The strategy development process will incorporate the perspectives of shippers, carriers, ports, environmental interests, state and Federal agencies, and other interested parties. Because of the six-month timeframe directed by Congress, the study will rely heavily on existing data, reports, and studies as well as leveraging other ongoing assessment studies.

The study will survey existing conditions, review the drivers of and uncertainties surrounding the future demand for international trade; forecast the macro makeup of the future ocean fleet; evaluate the regional environmental footprints of navigation modernization, and address elements of benefits estimation and implication of modernization costs to the USACE Civil Works budget and for Federal investment more generally. The study will also review future options for financing and considerations of modernization within the context of the Nation's overall intermodal transportation system. Although the strategy will articulate options for potential Congressional actions for modernization, its focus will remain at a strategic level and will not identify specific project priorities for ports or waterways.

Because of the broad stakeholder interest in the strategy, IWR is conducting the investigation and communicating the findings in a transparent and accessible manner. IWR aims to leverage outreach activities already conducted and currently planned under the Department of Transportation's ongoing Panama Canal Expansion Study.

IWR has posted information about this "U.S. Port and Inland Waterways Modernization Strategy: Options for the Future" on its website. As the study progresses, this website will include study updates, report outlines, and draft report sections. Peer-to-peer feedback is welcome. The study team will be accepting information and feedback through March 27 for consideration in initial drafts of the study document, followed by reviews of the work by the Executive Branch, and ultimately transmittal to the Committees in June 2012. The study team is headed by Technical Director Keith Hofseth, Study Manager Kevin Knight, and Communications and Public Engagement Lead Hal Cardwell, all of IWR.

Learn More

For more information, visit <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/portandwaterways/>