



# International Longshoremen's Association Local No. 1291

A.F.L. - C.I.O.

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September 19, 2011

Boise Butler  
*President*

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*Secretary-Treasurer*

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*Trustee*

Keith Browning  
*Sergeant-At-Arms*

John Power  
*Sergeant-At-Arms*

The Honorable Barack Obama  
*President*  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Mr. President:

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1291 eagerly joins a wide variety of supporters from labor, business, and government to petition you directly to fully restore federal funding to the Delaware River Main Stem Channel Deepening Project. By dredging the river to 45 feet, not only will the Port of Philadelphia be able to maintain its competitive edge and the jobs that go with it, but we will compete for new cargo and tens of thousands of jobs that will come with it.

Please allow me to emphasize something that is often forgotten in the controversy: the deepening project is already underway. Thanks to funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the first section of the channel was deepened between March and September of 2010. We are poised to begin a second section this fall. The project is no longer just a dream; it is a reality. But without federal funding, the work will stop.

Mr. President, I need not provide you the excruciating details of the ongoing recession. But, please allow me to point out that Philadelphia's unemployment rate is higher than the national average. The jobs we are desperately trying to preserve and create are family-sustaining jobs that pay a livable wage. The men and women who work at the Port of Philadelphia spend their dollars in the Delaware Valley, thus helping the region's economic vitality.

The reality is, the deepening project should have been completed a long time ago. It was authorized 19 years ago by Congress, and since 1998, \$77.4 million was appropriated for the work. This is a clear indication of Congress' intention to fund the project. However, only \$22 million of that money has been spent and \$53 million reprogrammed for other projects! It was our understanding that these funds would be repaid once the project began. That has not happened.

With your support, I am told that deepening the channel will bring 3 million tons of new cargo per year and create 75,000 direct and indirect jobs. This is the kind of economic stimulus that reenergizes an entire region, and no doubt would spur good news and goodwill throughout Pennsylvania, a state, quite frankly, that is very important to your reelection.

Mr. President, we cannot accomplish this without the support of your Administration. This project is environmentally sound, economically justified, and long overdue for completion. I urge you to fully restore the money we were promised.

Respectfully yours,

Boise Butler, III  
*President*

cc: Hon. Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
Mr. Jacob Lew