THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASKFORCE

October 2, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

We request a final version of the report drafted by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Protection Directorate Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis analyzing the impact of an unexpected closure of the Poe Lock in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, should this aging lock fall into disrepair. A formal DHS report will demonstrate to all those involved, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), that further delay of the new lock Congress authorized in 1986 is not an option. We ask that you act with speed given the severity of consequences a delay could cause, as currently no shipping alternative exists for the quantity of iron ore the Poe Lock transports.

The Soo Locks, which the Poe Lock is part of, provide for the efficient transportation of iron ore throughout the North American manufacturing economy. The lock system is maintained by the USACE and is essential to the transportation of iron ore to integrated steel manufacturing facilities adjacent to the lower Great Lakes. Seventy percent of the carrying capacity of the U.S. Great Lakes fleet on which the steel industry depends can only transit between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes through the Poe Lock, which was last rebuilt in 1968. A severance of this supply line would cause devastating damage to the automobile, appliance, and other manufacturing industries in the Great Lakes region and across North America.

Without the complete, final DHS report, the USACE and Congress will not have sufficient information to assess the consequences of further delaying or not building a secondary lock. In 1986, Congress authorized a new Soo Lock, with the same dimensions as the Poe Lock, to be built at the current location of two older closed locks (the Davis Lock and the Sabin Lock). The last report completed regarding this project was in 2004 by the USACE.

We urge you to complete the Department's analysis of the Poe Lock and provide each of us with copies of the report because it is vital that Congress, USACE, and the Office of Management and Budget understand the potential consequences of inaction to our

nation. Our constituents would suffer the greatest impacts from such an unexpected closure, but the damage would reverberate throughout the entire continent.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Mark Kirk
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Dan Coats
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Rob Portman
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Ron Johnson
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
The Honorable Shaun Donovan, Director of the Office Management and Budget (OMB)