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**Port Infrastructure Investment Testimony for House
Transportation Finance Committee – IIJA funding opportunities**

Good afternoon Chair Hornstein and Representatives. My name is Kathryn Sarnecki, I'm a registered civil engineer in MN, SVP of Real Estate and Development for the Saint Paul Port Authority, an executive member of the Minnesota Ports Association, and a member for the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee. It is my honor to talk to you today about the importance of funding for transportation especially on our inland waterway system.

More aggressively funding port infrastructure now will position the state and its agricultural and industrial sectors for long-term success. Funding port infrastructure, especially at this time, is smart for several reasons:

1. The Minnesota's Department of Transportations' Port Development Assistance Program (PDAP) funding request of \$28M in 2022 is vital to being able access federal funds for competitive port infrastructure grants funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The need for investment is great, in fact, the Minnesota Ports Association has identified over \$125 million in future infrastructure

project. Luckily the IIJA funding more than doubles the Maritime Administration's Port Infrastructure Development Program grant funding to nearly \$4 billion over the next 5 years. A key to unlocking the federal competitive grant funds is being able to request closer to 50% funds from the grants. This method has allowed Saint Paul and Duluth Seaway Port Authorities to leverage PDAP grant awards to be competitive and receive federal infrastructure grants.

2. Global freight demand is projected triple between 2020 and 2050 according to the intergovernmental organization International Transport Forum. While we seek to bring down greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change, we need to emphasize the use of our waterways as the most energy efficient mode of freight transportation.
3. Global supply chains are strained from the pandemic and these disruptions translate to opportunities for Minnesota to strengthen our national supply chains. Infrastructure investments enable Minnesota's ports to be creative and nimble in providing supply chain solutions.

4. As port cities, we need to be alert to the need to increase resilience in the face of increasing frequency and intensity of storms. We are indeed building back better.