Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 28, 2016

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Upton and Shuster, and Ranking Members Pallone and DeFazio:

As leaders of the Congressional Steel Caucus and strong supporters of domestic manufacturing, we write to request that you give all due consideration to adopting permanent Buy America provisions in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and ensuring that the Buy America provisions that are included in Section 7117 of the Senate bill are included in the final WRDA package.

America's manufacturers and its employees across the country are the backbone of our nation's economy which today continues to be the leader in the world. These manufacturers have supplied the vast needs of our nation's transportation, infrastructure, and construction and energy sectors. However, the onslaught of imports from across the globe, including massive imports from China's manufacturing platform, have become more commonly used in recent years for many public works and infrastructure projects.

Since 2000, the United States has lost more than 5 million manufacturing jobs as American companies have been shipped overseas or forced to the brink of bankruptcy due to the chronic and unfair trade practices by foreign trading partners. Today, the domestic steel industry is facing one of the worst import crises in modern history due to the onslaught of cut-rate foreign steel imports from China and stagnant national demand. During these difficult times, the United States government should be ensuring that taxpayer dollars are not spent on foreign produced goods when there is sufficient domestic capacity to meet our nation's growing infrastructure needs.

The Senate WRDA bill includes important provisions to reauthorize the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program, which includes resources to assist communities such as Flint, Michigan. The DWSRF serves as one of the primary sources of federal financing for water infrastructure and for American producers. Unlike other major federal infrastructure programs, the DWSRF does not have a permanent statutory application of Buy America preferences.

However, a Buy America preference has been in effect for several fiscal years due to bipartisan support for its inclusion in Interior and Environment Appropriations Acts. Permanent statutes applying the same procurement preference to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act program were enacted with the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA). The 2014 WRRDA provisions were supported by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress. The application of these preferences has had a positive impact on the American manufacturing sector and the communities that they serve. Failure to use domestic materials for important infrastructure projects is a matter of national security and threatens the public safety of American citizens that rely on our nation's public works.

We urge you to give full and fair consideration to including Buy America provisions in the final WRDA conference agreement. We look forward to working with you to further our shared goals of providing high-quality water infrastructure to the American people and protecting the American manufacturing sector, workers, and communities across the country.

Sincerely,

Tim Murphy
Chairman
Congressional Steel Caucus

Peter J. Visclosky
Vice-Chairman
Congressional Steel Caucus