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Casey Introduces Major Legislation to Upgrade Locks and Dams in Pittsburgh

River Act Will Help Protect Over 200,000 Jobs, Create a More Efficient Waterway System

February 28, 2013

*Legislation Will Increase Investment in Region’s Waterways, Take Steps to Reduce Cost Overruns*

**Washington, DC** - U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), today introduced new legislation to address current problems facing locks and dams serving the Port of Pittsburgh, which is the 2nd largest inland river port in the nation. Senator Casey’s *Reinvesting In Vital Economic Rivers and Waterways Act of 2013*, also known as the RIVER Act, will help ensure locks and dams projects stay on schedule and on budget. This bill, co-sponsored by Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), will also increase the overall investment in waterways projects.

“Our region’s locks and dams play a vital role in the moving of commerce, creating and sustaining jobs, and supporting economic growth throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. It’s critical that we maintain and upgrade infrastructure that allows the continual use of waterways in the long term,” Senator Casey said. “This legislation is about increasing investments in our rivers and reforming the current process in order to reduce waste and limit cost overruns. This bill will make our waterways more effective and efficient.”

The RIVER Act will increase the federal government’s investment in the region’s waterways and increase overall investment through the creation of an additional revenue stream financed by users. The bill also contains a number of reforms to the way waterways’ projects are managed to ensure cost overruns are reduced. Key features of the RIVER Act include:

* **Project Management Process Reforms:** The bill would allow risk-based cost estimates would that would help to ensure cost estimates are not exceeded and project schedules are kept.  Any project with a multiyear funding stream would need a commitment from Congress.Projects that cost $45 million or more would be required to undergo an independent external peer review process that would provide the Army Corps with an independent assessment of the models they use as well a range of alternatives and risk and uncertainty analyses.
* **20 Year Capital Development Plan:** The RIVER Act will requirethe Secretary of the Army to work with the Inland Waterways Users board to develop a twenty year capital investment program for inland waterways projects.
* **User fee increase:** The RIVER Actrevises the Inland Waterways User Fee to 29 cents per gallon beginning after 2013- a change that industry strongly supports.
* **Cost Share Requirements:** The RIVER Act reforms the way waterways’ projects are paid for resulting in an increase in the overall investment in inland waterways projects . This reform would also help ensure that these projects get completed in shorter time periods.

**Press Contact**

April Mellody 202-228-6367

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