

AAPA Press Release
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Christopher J. Connor,
President and CEO,
AAPA

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AAPA Cheers New Ports Emergency Relief Program in FY21 National Defense Authorization Act

NDAA language also authorizes \$750 million for Port Infrastructure Development Program



The [American Association of Port Authorities](#) (AAPA) —the unified and collective voice of America's seaports—welcomed news that Congress has completed

negotiations on the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that specifies the budget, expenditures and policies of the U.S. Department of Defense. Included in that legislation is language to establish a new Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program (MTSERP) to provide needed funding to ports following natural disasters and emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

AAPA President and CEO [Christopher J. Connor](#) said, “By putting forward this legislation, it's clear that Congress understands the nation's need for strong and resilient ports and supply chains. Including the new Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program in the FY21 NDAA bill is a definitive statement by our federal policymakers about the criticality of America's ports and how essential they are in keeping the goods we need and depend on moving, whatever the circumstances or calamities that may impact them. We hope that Congress passes this proposal soon, and that President Trump signs it into law.”

In a further Congressional nod to the value of America's maritime ports, the NDAA also includes language to raise the authorized funding level for the [Port Infrastructure Development Program](#) (PIDP) to \$750 million annually, up from \$500 million. PIDP grants help improve port and

freight infrastructure to ensure the nation's future freight transportation needs will be met.

“AAPA thanks House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY), Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) for their stalwart support and hard-fought efforts to protect and ensure the viability of our nation's ports. They are the true champions of the emergency relief program for ports in the NDAA,” said Mr. Connor. He added: “Our next steps are to strongly advocate that Congress pass this bill and then appropriate funds to this new emergency relief program in the next COVID-19 relief package.”

In addition to emergency relief and increased infrastructure funding authorized for ports, the FY21 NDAA bill includes several other aspects advanced by AAPA. One is a provision requiring the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a review of screening processes for international cargo at Great Lakes and inland ports. The review is to include details such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP) staffing levels, space provided to CBP by ports, and an analysis of current port/CBP cost-sharing agreements. This provision is similar to one in the Senate's FY21 Homeland Security Appropriations Committee Report which also calls for a review of CBP facilities use on a national level.

Another NDAA provision important to ports is in the Coast Guard section. It authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to require the installation and use of specified navigation equipment, communications equipment, electronic relative-motion analyzer equipment, etc., to comply with vessel traffic tracking.

About AAPA

Founded in 1912 and recognized as the unified voice of seaports in the Americas, AAPA today represents 130 of the leading seaport authorities in the United States, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean and more than 200 industry solution providers and associate members, firms and individuals with an interest in seaports. Cargo activities at U.S. seaports support nearly 31 million American jobs and account for 26 percent of the U.S. economy, generating nearly \$5.4 trillion in total economic activity and more than \$378 billion in federal, state and local taxes in 2018. To meet the growing demand for trade, AAPA and its members are committed to keeping seaports navigable, secure and sustainable. For more information, visit www.aapa-ports.org. On Twitter: http://twitter.com/AAPA_Seaports



