

**AAPA Press Release**  
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*Relief grant funds will help American ports to manage the impact this pandemic is having on their ability to function efficiently and for maintaining a state of readiness.*

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**Christopher J. Connor,**  
President & CEO,  
AAPA

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## **U.S. Ports Urge Congress to Allocate Relief As Policymakers Begin Final COVID-19 Negotiations**

*Advocacy letters sent to U.S., House, Senate and Administration leaders*



*AAPA President & CEO  
Christopher J. Connor*

As U.S. policymakers begin negotiations on the next coronavirus aid package, America’s port authorities are aggressively advocating for critical relief to manage the “extremely negative impacts” on the seaport industry brought on by the pandemic.

Among the port leaders’ advocacy efforts [are letters sent today](#) to U.S. House,

Senate and Administration leaders, urging them to provide \$1.5 billion for seaports to cover business-critical expenses that ports have incurred due to COVID-19. The letters state that while America’s seaports are crucial for ensuring the nation is able to quickly recover from its current economic crisis, ports have been neglected in previous coronavirus aid legislation.

Based on a [2018 port economic impacts study](#), the COVID-19 pandemic could result in a direct loss of 130,000 jobs at U.S. seaports.

“Due to the COVID-19 crisis, America’s seaports are experiencing significant financial challenges as commercial cargo has plummeted and passenger travel has nearly ceased,” said [American Association of Port Authorities](#) (AAPA) President and CEO [Christopher J. Connor](#). “At the same time, their expenses for things such as personal protection equipment for their workers, sanitation protocols often requiring extensive worker overtime, safety and disinfection supplies, and even security, have greatly reduced ports’ ability to invest in necessary infrastructure maintenance and upgrades, and make their debt and bond obligation payments.”

Mr. Connor further noted that, as a result of the pandemic, furloughs and layoffs have begun in the maritime industry and across the supply chain. Relief grant funds, he said, “will help American ports to manage the impact this pandemic is having on their ability to function efficiently and for maintaining a state of readiness.”

“The relief we’re seeking isn’t about replacing lost carrier, cargo and cruise passenger revenue,” Mr. Connor emphasized. “It’s about ensuring that ports are able to keep pace with the accelerating costs of protecting their workers while keeping their workforce employed, ensuring bond and other debt instrument payments aren’t missed, and ultimately about maintaining a state of readiness to significantly aid in the nation’s eventual economic recovery.”

**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](http://www.aapa-ports.org). On Twitter: [http://twitter.com/AAPA\\_Seaports](http://twitter.com/AAPA_Seaports)*



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