

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 9, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Interior, Environment and  
Related Agencies  
709 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Interior, Environment and  
Related Agencies  
2205 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Interior, Environment and  
Related Agencies  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Interior, Environment and  
Related Agencies  
2256 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Murkowski and Calvert and Ranking Members Udall and McCollum:

As you prepare the Conference Report for the *Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2017*, we write in strong support of extending the Erie National Canalway Heritage Corridor by appropriating \$12,000,000 for Fiscal Year 2017, as was included in the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill, so that it may continue to be an integral part of nation's history.

Not only do national heritage areas (NHAs) preserve landmarks of historic and cultural significance, but they also deliver recreational and educational opportunities to visitors, residents, and entire regions of our country. NHAs have been incredibly successful at leveraging federal resources, and by forging public-private partnerships have attracted an average of \$5.50 of private funding for every federally appropriated dollar.

The Erie Canal is considered one of the most successful and influential public works projects in our nation's history. By connecting the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean, it established New York as the center of global trade and finance. In 2000, the Erie Canal's extraordinary impact was recognized when Congress designated it as a National Heritage Corridor.

In order for the Erie Canalway to continue to receive annual appropriations, its current lifetime cap of \$10,000,000 must be extended in the Fiscal Year 2017, and raised to \$12,000,000. Historically, Congress has extended funding for other Heritage Areas that have reached their

appropriated limit. We ask that Congress now follow this set precedent, and allow the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor to continue its important mission.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request, and for recognizing the vital role that the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor holds in both the region, and the entire nation.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress