



**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Washington DC 20515**

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Republican Staff Director

June 9, 2020

The Honorable R.D. James  
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary James:

I write to request your urgent assistance for an emergency dredging project in southwest Oregon. It is my understanding that the Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has submitted an emergency funding request to support maintenance dredging at the mouth of the Rogue River at the Port of Gold Beach, a federally authorized navigation channel. This work is vital to the continued authorized mission at this project and the local economy, and I respectfully request you approve emergency funding as expeditiously as possible.

The federal channel at the mouth of the Rogue River is threatened by exceptional shoaling which has reduced depths to two feet in places, well below the authorized depth of this project. Continued degradation of this channel coupled with reduced depths as a result of summer flows from the seasonally impacted Rogue River endangers the functioning of this harbor and poses an immediate threat to both safety and the regional economy. Additionally, further shoaling jeopardizes the Corps' ability to maintain the channel altogether, calling into question the ongoing viability of this project.

The Port of Gold Beach is home to a U.S. Coast Guard seasonal search and rescue detachment (SARDET) equipped with a 47' motor lifeboat that provides essential life-saving missions in Oregon's infamously tumultuous seas. Last summer, shoaling in the navigation channel limited the SARDET deployment, replacing the 47' motor lifeboat and with a 29' motor lifeboat which is not rated for breaking waves or inclement weather. Current bar conditions are so adverse that an Army Corps survey boat is reported to have recently run aground in the federal navigation channel at the Port.

The Port of Gold Beach is a vital economic link in southwestern Oregon. It is home to a large recreational fishing fleet and a jet boat tour operator that moors at the Port, both of which benefit from the summer tourist season and sustain the local economy. The Port also provides remote U.S. Postal Service mail service to inland residents along the Rogue River. Shoaling in the

navigation channel threatens these industries and the fundamental way of life in southwestern Oregon.

Given the seriousness of the shoaling and its impact on the local community, the Port of Gold Beach should be considered for emergency assistance. Thank you for your consideration of this request for the immediate mobilization of dredging resources. Time is of the essence, as the Yaquina is currently transiting nearby waters and could be rapidly mobilized to address this concern.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you require additional information, please contact Ryan Seiger on my staff at [Ryan.Seiger@Mail.House.Gov](mailto:Ryan.Seiger@Mail.House.Gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. DeFazio". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Peter A. DeFazio  
Chair