



Letter to the editor: Rep. Landry is not a fan of earmarks

By: [Politico Readers](#)

January 20, 2011 05:43 PM EST

On Congress's "[What earmark ban? Freshman pushes project funds](#)," (POLITICO, Jan. 14) incorrectly criticizes Rep. Jeff Landry, suggesting he is asking for earmarks for projects "in his backyard."

Landry's letter to his colleagues last week brought their attention to a critical problem: the lack of efficient funding for our waterways transportation infrastructure, which the Wall Street Journal wrote about on Jan. 6.

U.S. infrastructure — bridges, rivers, roadways, runways or railways — needs recapitalization. Landry is correct to underscore that waterways jobs are crucial to our nation's economic recovery.

On the inland system, many locks and dams were built in the 1930s and are showing their age. Efficient locks and dams facilitate our nation's competitive edge, because farmers, coal producers and petroleum product manufacturers and others cannot transport these critical bulk commodities for export or for domestic use in a cost-efficient way without the waterways.

The nation's waterways move cargo in the safest, most environmentally friendly, traffic-congestion-relieving, cost-efficient way. Just one barge has the same capacity as 70 trucks or 16 rail cars.

While there are many beneficiaries of the waterways system, commercial users are the only segment to pay a tax for use.

A new funding proposal developed by the Inland Waterways Users Board — the Inland Waterways Capital Development Plan — calls for the industry to increase the fee it pays to help bring 25 navigation projects online, as opposed to just six over the next 20 years under the current funding system.

Landry should be applauded for putting the nation's interest ahead of his parochial interests. He understands that our waterways can move our nation forward.

Cornel Martin

President, Chief Executive Officer

Waterways Council