

SR-97, As Adopted by Senate, February 21, 2012

Substitute for Senate Resolution No. 97.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact legislation to ensure that amounts credited to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund are used solely for the dredging, infrastructure, operation, and maintenance of federally-authorized ports, harbors, and waterways.

Whereas, Domestic shippers and importers using Great Lakes and coastal ports pay more than a billion dollars per year in federal harbor maintenance taxes. Congress established the tax to fund harbor operation and maintenance, particularly dredging, at these ports; and

Whereas, Despite a nearly \$6 billion balance in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, our nation's dredging needs are not being met. Throughout our nation and particularly in the Great Lakes region, the lack of dredging has forced shippers to operate inefficiently and carry lighter loads, costing them millions of dollars each year; and

Whereas, The Obama Administration has only budgeted about half of the revenue collected through the harbor maintenance tax for maintaining our nation's harbors. Last year, nearly \$1.5 billion were collected from shippers, but only \$758 million has been allocated for dredging harbors in Michigan and other coastal states; and

Whereas, During the current turbulent economic conditions, we must make every effort to support economic activity by maintaining the infrastructure necessary for commerce. Essentially by, using harbor maintenance taxes placed in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to finance and balance other portions of the federal budget, we are breaking our promise to the shippers paying the tax and hurting our nation's economic recovery; and

Whereas, Current congressional legislation (H.R. 104 and S. 412) would ensure that harbor maintenance taxes are only used for their intended purpose to maintain our nation's harbors; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact legislation to ensure that amounts credited to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund are used solely for the dredging, infrastructure, operation, and maintenance of federally-authorized ports, harbors, and waterways; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.