PORT OF MONROE

Est. 1932
MICHIGAN'S ONLY PORT ON LAKE ERIE

2929 East Front Street, P.O. Box 585, Monroe, MI 48161-0585
TEL: (734) 241-6480 FAX: (734) 241-2964
WEBSITE: www.portofmonroe.com
EMAIL: mail@portofmonroe.com

MONROE PORT COMMISSION

Paul C. LaMarre III	Port Director
Thomas A. Krzyston	Chairman
Dale H. Brose	Vice Chairman
Kenyon Calender	Secretary
Lisa Leachman	Commissioner
Thomas Myers	Commissioner

GENERAL LEGAL COUNSEL

Thomas P. Russow, PLLC
2929 E. Front Street
P.O. Box 585
Monroe, MI 48161
TEL: (734) 735-7648
FAX: (734) 241-2964

ENGINEER

John J. Emig, Jr.
Johnson & Anderson, Inc.
4494 Elizabeth Lake Rd.
Waterford, MI 48328
TEL: (248) 681-7800
FAX: (248) 681-2660

September 12, 2012

Michigan State Senate
Natural resources Committee
Room 100, Farnum Building, 125 W. Allegan Street
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Port of Monroe, our commissioners, and surrounding community partners to seek your support for Senate Bill 1212: legislation to reopen Michigan's ports and enable our farmers and manufacturers to once again export Michigan products to overseas markets.

Michigan has more commercial ports than any other Great Lakes state. These ports are a transportation asset, providing Michigan businesses with a gateway to international trade. Most Michiganders would be shocked to learn that our ports have effectively been closed to export cargo for more than five years. Since January 2007, not a single export cargo has been loaded at a Michigan port. Instead, Michigan products are shipped by truck or rail to the ports of adjacent states. This adds additional cost, hurts our economy and makes Michigan products less competitive in the global marketplace.

At the heart of this controversy are Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regulations that seek to minimize the transfer of aquatic organisms in the ballast water of commercial vessels. While we share MDEQ's concern for the health of the Great Lakes, the agency's ballast water discharge rules are the most stringent in the nation and have set an unachievable standard. Since taking effect in 2007, these rules have prohibited international vessels from calling upon our ports as technology does not presently exist to enable their compliance. Instead, they have been forced to call upon businesses in adjacent states where no similar rules exist. All of our neighboring states plus the Province of Ontario have accepted technology based treatment methods that meet the standards of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). While we share the same waters Michigan stands alone as our export industry and economy continue to suffer.

In March of this year, the U.S. Coast Guard issued new federal regulations to address the ballast water issue. These regulations fall directly in line with the established IMO standard and will require that all ocean-going ships install equipment to clean ballast water prior to discharge. In light of these new federal rules, it is appropriate for Michigan to reconsider its approach.

No other state in the nation has closed its ports to the detriment of its own commerce and this legislation offers a common sense reform of unworkable regulations that have clearly harmed the "Great Lakes State."

I appreciate your leadership on this issue and thank you for all of your efforts.

Sincerely,

Paul C. LaMarre III
Port Director