

Substitute for House Resolution No. 325.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to provide funding to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for dredging harbors of refuge and repairing and maintaining seawalls of harbors of refuge in Michigan, particularly Portage Lake Harbor located in Onekama, MI.

Whereas, Recreational boating is a popular activity and a key component of Michigan's and the other Great Lakes states' tourism industries. Michigan has nearly 1 million registered boats, more than any other Great Lakes state. These boaters generate over \$4 billion in economic activity in Michigan and help support over 34,000 jobs. In the Great Lakes region, the impact is even greater, with over \$34 billion in economic activity generated and 244,000 jobs supported; and

Whereas, Nearly half of sportfishing in the Great Lakes region occurs from boats. Currently, Michigan ranks 5th in the nation in the number of licensed resident and nonresident anglers, and these anglers contribute \$2 billion annually to our economy and generate \$225 million in state tax revenue each year. Charter fishing operations play an important role in providing access to the Great Lakes to non-boating owning anglers; and

Whereas, Regular dredging and maintenance and repair of breakwater seawalls is needed to keep recreational harbors open to boaters in Michigan and the other Great Lakes states. Natural shoaling exacerbated by continued low lake levels has left many recreational harbors too shallow for boaters to enter safely, which is jeopardizing charter fishing operations, local communities, and other businesses that depend on boating. Portage Lake Harbor, Leland Harbor, and Arcadia Harbor are just a few of the fifteen Great Lakes harbors of concern that are dangerously shallow for boaters; and

Whereas, Not only is dredging and maintenance and repair of breakwater seawalls needed to accommodate recreational boaters, but also to provide safe harbor to all types of boaters, including commercial shippers. Maintaining harbors of refuge is a requirement to ensure that our obligation of providing safe shipping lanes for trade is met. With Portage Lake Harbor being one of the four Michigan harbors of refuge along the western side of the state and one of the thirteen statewide, it is a necessity that it be maintained and dredged to a proper depth; and

Whereas, The federal budget did not include funding for dredging harbors of refuge and maintenance and repair of breakwater seawalls of harbors of refuge maintained in the past by the United States Army Corp of Engineers. This lack of funding will cripple the Great Lakes recreational boating and charter fishing industry, impacting millions of boaters, businesses, and communities that they support. Because no funding has been provided, local Great Lakes communities have had to acquire private funding to be able to keep tourism alive during the boating season; and

Whereas, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers never completed a replacement seawall at Portage Lake Harbor begun in 2003. The seawall is now undermined, further narrowing the shipping channel. The Army Corps has designated the seawall as facing "imminent failure"; and

Whereas, It is necessary, for the safety of commercial shippers and all other Great Lakes traffic, to maintain harbors of refuge and, therefore, it should be deemed worthy to appropriate funds from the federal Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which holds surplus funds in excess of \$8 billion, to Great Lakes harbors. The relatively small federal investment needed to maintain these harbors is insignificant compared to the billions of dollars and thousands of jobs generated; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress of the

United States to provide funding to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for dredging harbors of refuge and repairing and maintaining seawalls of harbors of refuge in Michigan, particularly Portage Lake Harbor located in Onkama, MI; and be it further

Resolved, That we call on Congress to include funding for the United States Army Corps of Engineers to rebuild and complete the Portage Lake Harbor seawall; 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.