



# SEAWAY TASK FORCE COALITION

## PORT MODERNIZATION

A distressing fact was recently made public by a bipartisan coalition of elected officials known as the Building America's Future Educational Fund. In a recent interview, the organization's co-chair, former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, observed, "Other countries understand that port innovation and capacity is key to competitiveness in an export-driven economy. The World Economic Forum now ranks U.S. port infrastructure 22<sup>nd</sup> in the world."

Since its inception, the Seaway Task Force has sought to educate the American public about the importance of port modernization, which includes the need for dredging. Not only do ports generate millions of jobs, they enhance U.S. competitiveness and U.S. security interests.

As Rendell noted, "Policymakers in Washington need to make smart infrastructure investments a priority, because if we don't, we will only fall further behind the rest of the world."

And, the Seaway Task Force has noted the problem is reaching epidemic proportions in parts of the country where port modernization has been chronically underfunded. Lakers continue to sail at less than capacity because shipping channels are clogged with dirt and silt.

For years, the Seaway Task Force has waged a battle to publicize the issue and educate new members of Congress. Congress needs to fund the Water Resources Development Act, an important source for port modernization and dredging dollars.

Tax generated by the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT), which was created specifically to promote port modernization, is not being used for that purpose. The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund currently has a surplus of \$6 billion. The adverse consequences of this failure are being compounded by advances in technology and the widening of the Panama Canal.

Oceangoing ships are getting larger and larger, while the numbers of U.S. ports capable of handling them are getting fewer and fewer because of the lack of infrastructure investment.

The Seaway Task Force pledges to continue to highlight the importance of port modernization