

The Newsletter of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Fall is here, and before you know it, the holiday season and the New Year will be just around the corner. Temperatures are turning colder, and so are our rivers, and therefore it is more important than ever to ensure safe practices including wearing your life jackets, knowing your limits, and being aware of the activity and people are around you to ensure your safety on the waterways.

Our hopes for a prosperous new year remain focused on the federal infrastructure bill and the potential for \$2.5 billion for new construction projects that could allow funding for the Upper Ohio Navigation Project that includes one new chamber at each of the locks (Montgomery, Dashield & Emsworth) on the Ohio River.

Our next newsletter will arrive in January 2022. The staff, the Commission, and I extend early wishes to you for a safe and joyous holiday season!

Mary Ann Bucci Executive Director, Port of Pittsburgh Commission

Peter Stephaich Honored by National Rivers Hall of Fame

The National Rivers Hall of Fame honored Peter Stephaich during the Annual Waterways Symposium hosted by Waterways Council Inc. in St. Louis, Mo., November 2 – 4. Stephaich is the recipient of the Hall of Fame Achievement Award, a distinction bestowed on individuals making significant contributions to America's waterways. A national leader on issues facing the inland waterway systems, he has been involved with many of the major industry organizations on a national level and has lent resources when needed.

Stephaich has served the river industry for over 30 years, and is the chairman and CEO of Blue Danube Incorporated and Campbell Transportation Company Inc., which employs approximately 500 people, owns 50 boats and 1,200 barges, and operates two shipyards. Outside of his work with Campbell Transportation, Stephaich has filled many roles. He has served as the chairman of Waterways Council Inc., as well as chairman and treasurer of the American Waterways Operators, and chairman and trustee of the National Waterways Foundation. Additionally, he has given his time to the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy, and was the 2014 River Bell Award Recipient. He also serves in several advisory capacities, based around money management and real-estate development, in other family-related businesses.

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The Waiting is the Hardest Part

by Tracy Zea

Traditionally, the end of September on Capitol Hill is routine, with a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government into December, devoid of drama and political drag-downs. But this September was the opposite of routine and more like a perfect storm of must-act deadlines with a politically charged, self-imposed deadline for legislation that had been anticipated for months.

In a flurry of activity, Congress faced extending the surface transportation reauthorization before its September 30 expiration, a self-imposed September 27 deadline by the House of Representatives to vote on a bipartisan infrastructure package that cleared the Senate, and a mid-October debt ceiling deadline for the nation.

And if you guessed that Congress kicked the can down the road, you are right. Congress passed a clean CR and debt ceiling extension through December 3, a short-term extension of the surface transportation reauthorization until the end of October. And despite last minute assurances by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that the infrastructure bill would hit the House floor by September 27, that infrastructure deadline has come and gone. So, what's next?

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Peter Stephaich continued

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission has had the pleasure of having Peter as part of our Board since 1999. Executive Director Mary Ann Bucci said of Stephaich's role and importance to our Port District: "The PPC is fortunate to have his leadership and appreciates his contribution. The success that our region has accomplished could not have happened without his dedication and commitment."



For more information on the National Rivers Hall of Fame and the Annual Waterways Symposium, check out the following links:

www.rivermuseum.com/national-achievement-award-winners

<https://waterwayscouncil.org/get-involved/annual-waterways-symposium>

New State Law to Enhance Boater Safety in Cold Waters

On Monday November 1st, The PA Fish and Boat Commission announced a law that requires all boaters to wear a life jacket while on any watercraft that is 16 feet or shorter between Nov. 1 and April 30. The new law requiring life jackets to be worn during the fall and winter was approved by lawmakers in 2021.

A U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket must be worn while a boat, kayak, canoe or paddleboard is underway or at anchor along all Pennsylvania waterways.

Temperatures begin to drop rapidly at this time of year, and even on sunny days when air temperatures are comfortable and warm, the water can be cold enough to put boaters at risk for sudden cold-water immersion. A life jacket can keep your head above water until help arrives.

Nearly 80% of all boating fatalities occurred because boaters were not wearing life jackets, according to state boating accident reports.

With recent drowning incidents this fall on small craft and along our river banks, the cold water temperatures place those who fall into our rivers into a precarious situation, and only a few moments before succumbing to the effects of cold water. Sudden cold-water immersion, or cold-water

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Waiting continued

Around Washington D.C., optimism still exists that an infrastructure package will be signed into law by the end of this calendar year. The timing of that, however, remains elusive. And like the song says, The Waiting is the Hardest Part. There is an assumption that because Congress's extension of the surface transportation reauthorization goes only to the end of October, it resets the proverbial shot clock for the infrastructure package. This is partially true; yes, Congress will need to act on the surface transportation bill by the end of October. If they don't, thousands of workers within states' departments of transportation will be furloughed, further blackening the eye on an already unpopular Congress, which has a 28% approval rating by one source.

Recent history shows a trend of short-term fixes. Over the past three multi-year Highway Trust Fund reauthorization bills, each had several extensions before being enacted into law. There were 12 short extensions of TEA21 before SAFETEA-LU was signed into law in 2005, 10 short extensions of SAFETEA-LU before MAP-21 was signed in 2012, five short extensions of MAP-21 before the FAST ACT was signed in 2015, and currently, we are already on two short term extensions of the FAST ACT.

As Progressive Democrats leveraged their strength to stall the infrastructure vote, reconciliation seems to be the driving factor for an infrastructure bill to be enacted. In fact, at the end of September, the White House doubled down and reiterated that the two bills are indeed linked, after some hedging about the connection earlier in the month. During the House infrastructure floor debate, Republicans continually stated that a vote for the infrastructure package would be a vote for the reconciliation bill, which ultimately proved true after President Biden came to Capitol Hill to meet with the Democratic caucus for the first time in his Presidency. According to The Wall Street Journal, "The infrastructure bill 'ain't going to happen until we reach an agreement on the next piece of legislation,' Mr. Biden told House Democrats."

The reconciliation process is at least a couple of weeks away from being ready for prime time, which poises infrastructure to be pushed into November, or potentially December. So as the song says, "Every day you see one more card, you take it on faith, you take it to the heart, the waiting is the hardest part."

Tracy Zea is the President of Waterways Council, Inc.

(Editor's note: As of the time of publication, the surface transportation bill which expired October 31, still awaits passing of the infrastructure bill or another extension. On October 28th, President Biden announced a revised package, and negotiations are ongoing.)



PPC, Campbell Transportation Host Round-Table with US Senator Robert Casey

On Tuesday, August 31, 2021 the Port of Pittsburgh Commission and Campbell Transportation hosted an inland waterways roundtable discussion with US Senator Robert Casey. The event was held at Campbell's Shipyard in Georgetown, PA. An audience of nearly 40 individuals from various sectors of the river industry gathered to discuss the state of our industry and convey the issues and needs of our waterways. Discussions centered on river infrastructure, as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has taken center stage with lawmakers in Washington, DC. Additionally, the future of our rivers was discussed, including the requirements and possibilities of container-on-barge in our region, as well as continuing to seek further opportunities related to the Shell Cracker facility on the Ohio River. The closing discussion turned to workforce needs in the river industry as jobs are opening and finding individuals to fill these positions is a primary concern.

Senator Casey has a long history of being an advocate for our industry, including developing the Water Resource Development Act, and his Calls to Action on the Upper Ohio and Lower Mon lock and dam projects.

Our thanks to Senator Casey and his staff, as well to Peter Stephaich and his team, and also to our attendees for helping to bring together an informative dialogue and continue our strong relationship with the elected officials who have worked to support our industry.



Boater Safety in Cold Waters continued

shock, occurs when a person is unexpectedly plunged into cold water below 70 degrees. A life jacket can keep an individual afloat until help arrives.

The following precautions should be taken while boating in cold weather:

- Always wear a life jacket, even when not required. Many life jackets offer insulation from cold air while boating in addition to insulation from cold water if a person falls overboard.
- Never boat alone.
- Leave a float plan with family or friends so that someone knows where you are departing from and when you intend to arrive back ashore.
- Become familiar with the waters you plan to use in advance of a trip.
- Bring a fully charged cell phone stored in a waterproof bag or container.
- Wear clothing that continues to insulate when wet, such as fleece, polypropylene or other synthetics.
- If you are about to fall into cold water, cover your mouth and nose with your hands to reduce the likelihood of inhaling water.
- If possible, stay with the boat. Get back into or climb on top of the boat.
- Do not remove clothing while in cold water.
- Use the Heat Escape Lessening Posture or "HELP;" when in cold water by bringing your knees to your chest and hugging them with your arms.
- Once out of the cold water, remove wet clothes and warm up as soon as possible.
- Seek medical attention if needed. Some effects of exposure to cold temperatures can be delayed.



Congratulations to PortPitt Commissioner Ed Gainey, newly elected Mayor of Pittsburgh!

OUR PORTPITT TEAM

MARY ANN BUCCI
Executive Director
mary-ann@portpitt.com



SCOTT HARSHMAN
Marketing/Program Manager
scott@portpitt.com



MICHA
PortPitt Mascot



MATT PAVLOSKY
Public Relations Manager
matt@portpitt.com



MIKE BRINZA
Port Analyst
mike@portpitt.com

