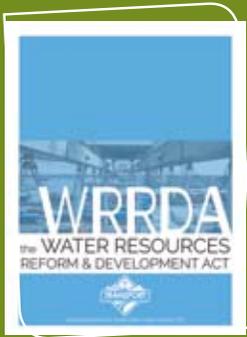


Soybean Input Key as Waterways Bill Enters Conference

| By **Tom Hance**



The cost and importance of transportation to the U.S. soybean industry is a frequently-cited factor in the discussion of the House's recently-passed Water Resources Reform & Development Act (WRRDA).

Thanks in part to ASA and the Soy Transportation Coalition

(STC), the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, led by Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) along with Water Resources Subcommittee Chairman Bob Gibbs (R-Ohio) and Ranking Member Timothy Bishop (D-N.Y.), has utilized soybean exports as an example of why the WRRDA bill is important and the potential impact it has on the U.S. economy. ASA, together with the STC, shared our priorities on waterways infrastructure with T&I committee and subcommittee leadership and staff, and continue to work with staff in both the House and Senate as conferees work to pass a final bill.

An analysis of the state of our waterways infrastructure commissioned by the STC compared the cost of shipping a ton of soybeans from Davenport, Iowa, to China, with the cost of shipping a similar ton of soybeans to China from Mato Grosso, Brazil (Brazil is the chief competitor for U.S. soybean farmers in the global market, and China is the leading global customer for soybeans). The comparison showed that, while Brazil has a cheaper cost of production, the U.S. soybean farmer makes up for that with access to a lower cost transportation system. However, with our competitors investing in their transportation infrastructure while ours is neglected, that advantage in the global market will dissipate.

Chairman Shuster seized on this as part of his message to enlist support for enactment of WRRDA, and has included the soybean example and a graphic in the promotional materials the committee is utilizing to generate support for the bill. ▣

