



County Commission of Wayne County

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Travis D. Thompson, President • Robert M. Thompson, Commissioner • Enoch J. Marcum, Commissioner

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Maritime Administrator
US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Support for designation of the Big Sandy River as a United States Marine Highway

Dear Maritime Administrator,

The Wayne County Commission is pleased to provide this letter of support for the joint Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) – West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) application to designate the Big Sandy River as a US Marine Highway. The Big Sandy River is a key component of the two states' multimodal transportation network and serves as a critical economic link in the nation's inland waterway system, connecting northeastern Kentucky and northwestern West Virginia shippers, manufacturers, power companies, and commodity producers to domestic and international markets via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. It also enhances the quality of life for the communities it serves, as it supports recreational activities such as boating and fishing and supports job opportunities related to manufacturing and commerce.

Designating the Big Sandy River as a Marine Highway opens the door for local planning agencies, industries, and shippers to apply for US Department of Transportation (USDOT) grants through the Maritime Administration (MARAD). These grant opportunities will support supply chains through investments that help move goods more quickly and efficiently along the river. Additionally, by investing in infrastructure that improves the efficiency of shipping along the river, suppliers gain more options to move their products, while also helping to reduce

congestion on regional highways and railroads leading to improved air quality and lower fuel consumption.

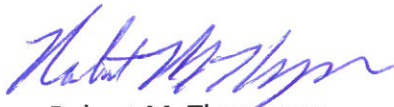
We recognize that the Big Sandy River is critical to supporting supply chains in West Virginia and Kentucky which sustain industries, support the local and regional development, and improve quality of life along the river. We also understand that investing in the Big Sandy River has positive local, regional, and national economic growth and environmental implications. As such, the Wayne County Commission fully supports this application and looks forward to the new investments into the industries and infrastructure along the Big Sandy River that the US Marine Highway designation will make possible.

Sincerely,

The Wayne County Commission
Wayne County, West Virginia



Travis D. Thompson
President



Robert M. Thompson
Commissioner



Enoch J. Marcum III
Commissioner