

# Comprehensive Freight, Economic Impact, and Market-Based Investment Analysis of Kentucky's Public Riverports and Waterways

## Project Sponsors

This statewide study is commissioned by the **Kentucky Association of Riverports** in coordination with the **Kentucky Transportation Cabinet** to evaluate the performance, competitiveness, and future investment potential of **Kentucky's public riverports and waterways**.

## Overview

Kentucky's public riverports and waterways serve as critical multimodal infrastructure supporting industrial development, agricultural distribution, domestic and international trade, and regional economic competitiveness. This project will deliver a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of current freight activity, economic contribution, infrastructure capacity, and emerging market opportunities to guide long-term strategic investment and policy decisions across the statewide riverport network.

## Purpose and Objectives

The study is designed to:

- Quantify economic impacts at both individual port and statewide levels.
- Evaluate infrastructure, operational capacity, and multimodal connectivity.
- Analyze freight flows, commodity trends, and competitive positioning.
- Identify emerging industries and growth opportunities aligned with market demand.
- Develop strategic, return-focused investment recommendations.
- Provide a long-range roadmap to inform public funding, planning, and policy.

## Scope of Analysis

The project will include all commercially navigable waterways and public riverports in the Commonwealth and will integrate:

- Baseline economic impact modeling (direct, indirect, and induced effects).
- Operational and infrastructure assessments of facilities, capacity, and resiliency.
- Market and competitive analysis of freight volumes, commodities, and positioning.
- Future demand forecasting and industry opportunity identification.
- Return-on-investment evaluation tied to capital, operational, and policy actions.
- Phased strategic investment scenarios spanning 5-, 10-, and 20-year horizons.

## Key Deliverables

- Comprehensive statewide report with findings and recommendations.
- Executive summary for policymakers and public stakeholders.
- Individual riverport profiles with operational, market, and economic detail.
- Economic models, dashboards, and data visualizations.
- Maps, graphics, and formal stakeholder presentations.

## Intended Impact

This study will provide Kentucky's ports and state partners with a defensible, market-informed framework for prioritizing infrastructure investment, strengthening grant competitiveness, enhancing freight system performance, and maximizing long-term economic return across the waterways and statewide riverport system.