

Waterways Council, Inc. · 499 S. Capitol Street, SW · Suite 401 · Washington, DC 20003
www.waterwayscouncil.org

March 2, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
House Energy & Water Appropriations
Subcommittee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
House Energy & Water Appropriations
Subcommittee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Cc: House Appropriations Committee Members

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Simpson, and Ranking Members Lowey and Kaptur:

The undersigned 56 organizations support the fiscal 2017 appropriation of Pre-Construction Engineering Design (PED) funding (\$10 million) for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) and urge the committee to approve it. Authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 but not yet under construction, NESP is an unprecedented, multi-purpose program allowing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to integrate management of the Upper Mississippi River System's infrastructure with ecosystem improvements.

This five-state program includes construction of seven modern, 1,200-foot navigation locks at the most congested lock locations (Locks and Dams 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25 on the Upper Mississippi River, and the La Grange and Peoria Locks on the Illinois Waterway). Congress has further authorized smaller-scale navigation efficiency improvements. NESP's authorization includes \$1.948 billion for the new locks and \$256 million for the small-scale efficiency measures; the authorization also includes \$1.717 billion for a 15-year ecosystem restoration program and \$10.42 million annually for its monitoring.

The unique program facilitates both a healthier economy and river ecosystem. It will create and support tens of millions of job-hours for skilled construction trades, as well as expand and sustain jobs at grain elevators, at manufacturing facilities, at ports and terminals and within the tourism sector. By modernizing navigation capacity, NESP will increase the economic potential of the American farmer and bolster the positive trade balance in the agriculture sector. By also investing in our river ecosystems, job opportunities can include marine construction workers, engineers and river scientists. In fact, approximately 300 jobs can be derived from PED funding, with potentially 6,000 jobs from a \$200 million construction appropriation.

While most of America's locks and dams were built in the 1920s-1930s, they must transport 21st century cargoes that fuel our modern economy. The U.S. Department of Transportation projects 1.1 billion tons of

increased freight will move on the inland waterways by 2040. This critical transportation supply chain component needs reinvestment and modernization.

Similarly, over the last 150 years, the ecological health of the Upper Mississippi River has degraded from multiple uses and alterations, but it could be substantially improved with NESP's implementation.

Ecological system improvements include modified dam operations, 65 backwater and island enhancements, 29 side channel reconnections, 92 modifications to channel structures, and system ecological monitoring to document river health and support riverine and riparian habitat. Our nation's inland waterways provide capacity, competition, and the most cost-competitive and environmentally friendly transportation option for our American bulk commodities used here in the U.S. and exported to marketplaces worldwide.

We ask you to consider the following facts:

- *Sixty percent of the nation's export-bound grain is transported on the inland waterways.*
- *An effective and efficient water transport system is essential to supply American farmers with fertilizer and inputs for planting seasons.*
- *Farmers depend on our waterways infrastructure to compete and win against producers outside the USA.*
- *Ecosystem restoration improvements will allow the ecological system to rebound and provide improved water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, supporting a \$1.2 billion recreational economy (1990 number).*
- *The Panama Canal expansion, when completed, will create opportunities for increased American trade, but not if our channels are not dredged and our locks and dams are not functioning.*
- *More than a half-million American jobs depend on operational ports and inland waterways.*
- *The waterways are vital to our manufacturing sectors and to the construction industry.*
- *American consumers benefit from transportation cost-savings made possible by the inland waterways; for every \$1 invested in our inland waterways, \$14 is returned in national benefits.*
- *NESP will restore valuable river habitat such as islands, flowing channels and marshes. Marshes provide floodwater storage, provide infiltration for water supply and process excess nutrients in the water to reduce the cost of water delivered to communities that use the river as a drinking water source.*

Our organizations respectfully request that \$10 million be appropriated specifically toward engineering and design to get this important program closer to construction-ready status in fiscal 2017. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Soybean Association
Archer Daniels Midland Company
Arkansas Soybean Association
Associated General Contractors of America
American Waterways Operators
Big River Coalition
Bunge
Cargill, Inc.
CHS, Inc.

Colorado Corn Growers Association
Corn Producers Association of Texas
Corn Refiners Association
Deere & Company
Ducks Unlimited
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois
GROWMARK
Illinois Corn Growers Association
Illinois Farm Bureau
Indiana Soybean Alliance
Indiana Corn Growers Association
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental & Reinforcing Iron Workers
Iowa Corn Growers Association
Kentucky Corn Growers Association
Kentucky Soybean Association
Laborers' District Council Chicago and Vicinity LDCLMCC
Laborers' International Union of North America
Mid-America Port Commission
Mid-America Intermodal Authority Port District
Minnesota AgriGrowth Council
Minnesota Grain & Feed Association
Missouri Corn Growers Association
Missouri Soybean Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain & Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
North America's Building Trades Unions
North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association
Pike and Scott County Farm Bureaus
St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council
The Nature Conservancy
Two Rivers Economic Development District
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of
the United States, Canada & Australia
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Upper Mississippi Waterway Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Waterways Council, Inc.
Waterways Journal
Wisconsin Corn Growers Association

The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

BUNGE



Cargill

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BIG RIVER COALITION



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The American Waterways Operators