



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

February 21, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chair, Senate EPW Committee
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster
United States House of Representatives
2209 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Vitter
United States Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Nick Rahall
United States House of Representatives
2307 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Boxer and Vitter, Representatives Shuster and Rahall, and Conferees:

The Wisconsin Assembly Committee on State and Federal Relations recently held an informational hearing on the Mississippi River and Dam System, which focused particular attention on the importance of the inland navigable waterways and their intrinsic value as a natural resource. Moreover, these precious waterways provide Wisconsin farmers and businesses with an economic advantage over much of the world, in terms of transporting goods and products across the globe.

In 2012, more than 18.2 million tons of cargo shipped into the system, while more than 3.8 million tons of cargo shipped out. This is the capacity equivalent of using 2,264,520 tractor trailers. Tonnage included 2.4 million tons of coal, 10.1 million tons of petroleum, 9.3 million tons of chemicals, and more than 25 million tons of farm products.

Among its many benefits, the river system provides the Midwest region with affordable coal for electric power, feed stocks for chemical plants, fertilizer for agricultural use, an outlet for many farm commodities, aggregate materials for construction, road salt to keep roads clear of ice and snow, and petroleum products for distributors.

Unfortunately, America has often been derelict in its maintenance and investment in our lock and dam system. Most of the 9-foot Upper Mississippi River navigation system was built in the

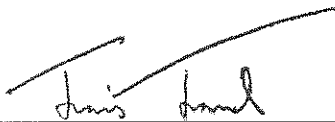
1930s under various Rivers and Harbor Acts. These navigation facilities had a 50-year design life and we are well beyond that timeframe today. The delayed and neglected maintenance of the system is becoming more and more prevalent.

It is estimated that the Rock Island District, which includes the Upper Mississippi, has a current navigation backlog of \$263 million, plus another \$700 million of additional known maintenance needs that are required. If a lock were to fail, extended repairs could trigger major consequences for shippers, manufacturers, consumers as well as farmers. To further illustrate this point, when the ports were shut down for Hurricane Katrina in 2005, disabling the lock and dam system, the cost to transport corn from the Midwest to New Orleans jumped significantly from 33 cents to 81 cents a bushel.

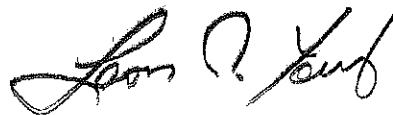
It is our understanding that Congress is currently considering a reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which would be a great first step in maintaining our current lock and dam system. The Senate and House have each passed their own versions of WRDA. We are writing today to strongly encourage the conference committee to finish its work on this vital piece of legislation, so that both chambers can vote on the compromised bill as soon as possible.

In closing, America's lock and dam infrastructure is too important to the health and prosperity of our nation's economy to neglect its preservation.

Sincerely,



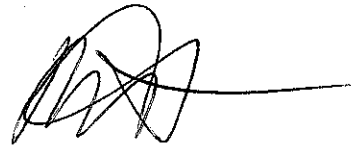
Representative Travis Tranel
Wisconsin State Assembly 49th District



Representative Leon Young
Wisconsin State Assembly 16th District



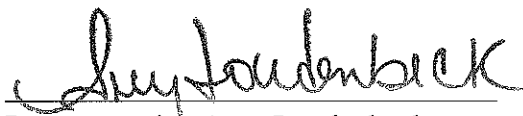
Representative Josh Zepnick
Wisconsin State Assembly 9th District



Representative Mandela Barnes
Wisconsin State Assembly 11th District



Representative Paul Tittel
Wisconsin State Assembly 25th District



Representative Amy Loudenberg
Wisconsin State Assembly 31st District

Rep. Jeff Mursau

Representative Jeffrey Mursau
Wisconsin State Assembly 36th District

Cc:

Representative Peter DeFazio
Representative Corrine Brown
Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson
Representative Timothy H. Bishop
Representative Donna Edwards
Representative John Garamendi
Representative Janice Hahn
Representative Rick Nolan
Representative Lois Frankel
Representative Cheri Bustos
Representative John J. Duncan, Jr.
Representative Frank LoBiondo
Representative Sam Graves
Representative Shelley Moore Capito
Representative Candice Miller
Representative Duncan Hunter
Representative Larry Bucshon
Representative Bob Gibbs
Representative Richard Hanna
Representative Daniel Webster
Representative Tom Rice
Representative Markwayne Mullin
Representative Rodney Davis
Representative Doc Hastings
Representative Rob Bishop

Senator Thomas Carper
Senator Ben Cardin
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Senator John Barrasso
Senator James Inhofe