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*Michael L. Parson*

GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MISSOURI

December 14, 2021

The Honorable Mike Connor  
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Connor:

On behalf of Missouri farmers and constituents who depend upon our nation's inland waterways to remain competitive, I write to encourage your support in prioritizing funding for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) – utilizing the \$2.5 billion provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for inland waterway projects.

While Missouri agriculture and other industries have proven capable of meeting the needs of their international customers, it is necessary to have a multi-modal transportation system that is cost-effective and can reliably connect supply with demand. Our inland waterway system, including our locks and dams, is an essential component of this supply chain.

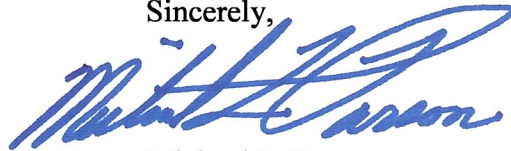
The NESP program was included in the December 2020 Inland and Intracoastal Waterways Twenty-Year Capital Investment Strategy (CIS) developed by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Inland Waterways User Board. The IIJA recommends that funding priority be provided to projects included in the CIS. The CIS recommends that Tiers A and B construction projects should be funded to completion, which includes Lock and Dam #25 (Tier A), LaGrange Lock and Dam (Tier A), and Lock and Dam #24 (Tier B).

Many of the locks and dams throughout the upper Mississippi River region opened over 80 years ago and provide only a single, 600 ft. X 110 ft. lock chamber. Construction at the above-mentioned locks and dams would result in a new 1,200 ft. X 110 ft. lock chamber built adjacent to the existing 600 ft. X 110 ft. lock chamber. This would enable a typical fifteen barge tow – transporting over 800,000 bushels of Missouri crops – to transit the lock in one single pass (a 30-45 minute process) compared to disassembling the barge tow into two sections, which results in two passes (over two hours). In addition, a second lock will provide needed resiliency and redundancy – allowing a key link in the supply chain to remain operational if one of the lock chambers closed.

Inland waterway stakeholders have demonstrated a willingness to invest their own resources in order to advance these important infrastructure projects. Several years ago, the navigation industry proposed and achieved a 45 percent increase in their commercial diesel user fee in order to provide additional investment towards improving the inland waterways system. A number of farmer organizations have recently partnered together to raise \$1 million to help underwrite the cost of pre-engineering and design expenses in order to encourage the NESP program to proceed.

As our nation proceeds with enacting the IJA investment plan, may the inland waterway system, and, in particular, Lock and Dam #25, LaGrange Lock and Dam, and Lock and Dam #24, be among the specific projects to receive funding. This will help position Missouri agriculture and industry to remain competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Parson", written in a cursive style.

Michael L. Parson  
Governor