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Mississippi River Mayors and the Waterways Council Applaud Corps' Infrastructure Spending Plan for Transformative Projects in Middle America Totaling \$5.3 billion for the Mississippi River Corridor

St. Louis, MO – Mayors of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI) from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Illinois gathered with the Waterways Council to profile the transformative potential of the major infrastructure projects now being funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) just released the spending plan for many of these new projects giving stakeholders a preview of the vital work that will take place over the next several years to improve the most important working river in the world.

“This is historic,” said **Mayor Errick Simmons of Greenville, MS and MRCTI Co-Chair**. “We have not seen this much investment for so many projects come to our corridor for decades. The IIJA funding coupled with the Hurricane Ida disaster supplemental will provide critical resources for infrastructure and environmental projects up and down the River. In my city of Greenville, we are especially excited about the flood protection work planned for the Yazoo/Mississippi River backwater areas and the floatable waste removal and clean-up work funded through the Mississippi River & Tributaries Program (MR&T).

The IIJA contains new funding for valuable resilience and economic development work including the newly funded NESP, or Navigation Ecosystem Sustainability Program. The IIJA allocation for MVD includes \$732 million for Lock 25 next to Grafton, IL just north of St. Louis and \$97.10 million for ecosystem restoration at Lock 22 between Hannibal and Louisiana, MO.

“NESP is an unprecedented, multi-purpose program addressing improvements needed for both navigation and ecosystem,” stated **Jeff Webb, Waterways Council vice chairman and President of Cargill Marine and Terminal**. “Lock 25 will be able to, for the first time, accommodate simultaneous two-way traffic. The original 600-foot chamber from 1939 will now be supplemented with a modern 1200 foot chamber. Not having to break tows in half at Lock and Dam 25 will make barge transportation safer, more efficient and deliver commodities with a lower carbon footprint. Plus, the ecosystem restoration measures will boost riverine and riparian habitat.”

“The city of Grafton resides at the western boundary of America’s Central Port which will benefit directly from the expansion slated for Lock 25 just north of both the port and Grafton. 175 million tons of cargo transits the Upper Mississippi River annually, with over 3 million tons passing directly through our area. When I served as District Engineer for the St. Louis District our environmental River engineers helped design the fish passage that will be installed at Lock 22 near Hannibal. This eco-friendly system will be an important environmental component to our \$17.2 billion Upper Mississippi River tourism and outdoor recreation economy,” explained **Mayor Mike Morrow of Grafton, IL.**

Additionally, the Corps’ spending plan published this month details projects funded through the Hurricane Ida disaster supplemental. The Mississippi Valley Division has \$2.4 billion from the supplement to put toward disaster resilience measures throughout the lower Delta. The MRCTI City of Gretna, LA is situated in the middle of the Corps’ Hurricane Ida project cluster.

“Several MRCTI Cities including my own of Gretna, LA sustained a direct hit from Hurricane Ida as it came ashore on August 29 as a category 4 storm with 150mph winds,” recalled **Mayor Belinda Constant of Gretna, LA and MRCTI Louisiana Chair.** “Ida cost no less than \$65 billion in damage. The \$2.4 billion allocated in the supplemental for resilience is crucial to our future preparedness. The projects now planned for Plaquemines Parish directly south of Gretna, and those listed for the Algiers Sub-Basin north of Gretna will not only complement my own mitigation projects, but also create additional protection and drainage capacity around the lower Delta.”

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[The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative](#) is a coalition of 101 mayors from across the Mississippi River Basin, which spans nearly a third of the country. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. More than 60 billion gallons of fresh water is withdrawn from the river daily. The River’s resources support 1.5 million jobs and create \$496.7 billion in annual revenue.

[Waterways Council](#)

The Waterways Council is the leading organization advocating for a modern national system of inland waterway infrastructure & ports.

[U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has approximately 37,000 dedicated Civilians and Soldiers delivering engineering services to customers in more than 130 countries worldwide. With environmental sustainability as a guiding principle, our disciplined Corps team is working diligently to strengthen our Nation’s security by building and maintaining America’s infrastructure and providing military facilities where our servicemembers train, work and live. We are also researching and developing technology for our war fighters while protecting America’s interests abroad by using our engineering expertise to promote stability and improve quality of life.