

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2018

The Honorable R.D. James
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary James,

We write to request your continued support for investing in our nation's aging waterway infrastructure, and respectfully urge you to direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to fund preconstruction engineering and design (PED) for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) on the Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System in the Fiscal Year 2019 Work Plan, while simultaneously completing the economic update funded in the Fiscal Year 2018 Work Plan.

Congress authorized NESP in 2007, which integrates the needs of both navigation infrastructure improvements and ecosystem restoration into a single, multi-purposed program. This includes the construction of seven 1,200-foot locks at the most congested locations of the Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway in addition to structural efficiencies and needed improvements to the ecosystem throughout the Upper Mississippi River System.

Our nation's inland navigation system provides a key strategic advantage to our nation's agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Unfortunately, the reliability of the more than 80-year-old locks and dams that NESP would address will continue to decrease if NESP is not implemented. A single lock closure alone would trigger a shutdown of the entire system.

According to a National Waterways Foundation Study, lock closures have increased by 700 percent over the past decade. This study also concluded that a one year closure of the LaGrange Lock and Dam would negatively impact 18 states, increase transportation costs by \$1.7 billion annually, and lead to a \$2.1 billion loss in farm-dependent incomes. With more than 60 percent of our nation's grain exports traveling through locks on the Upper Mississippi River System, we cannot afford to let this scenario become reality. NESP provides the opportunity to address these reliability issues and protect this infrastructure from catastrophic failure.

NESP directly impacts five states (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin), as well as the entire Mississippi River, and is of national importance. NESP has the support of industry, labor, and conservation stakeholders, and enjoys wide bipartisan support. Funding NESP will result in both immediate and long-term benefits to our communities, and our nation. We therefore urge you to direct the Corps to resume and complete PED for this critical program.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress



David Young
Member of Congress



Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



Jason Lewis
Member of Congress



Steve King
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Robin Kelly
Member of Congress



Billy Long
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Tim Walz
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Jan Schakowsky
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Sam Graves
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Dave Loebsack
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Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
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Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos
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James Comer
Member of Congress



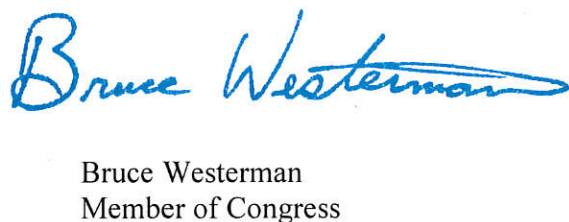
Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress



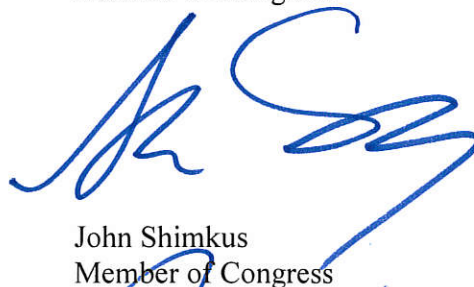
Rod Blum
Member of Congress



Darin LaHood
Member of Congress



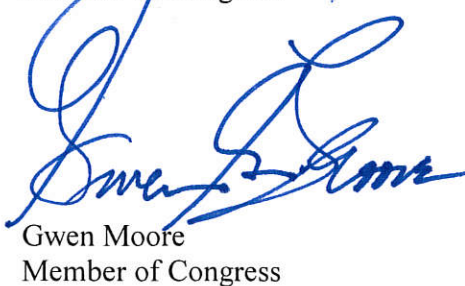
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



John Shimkus
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



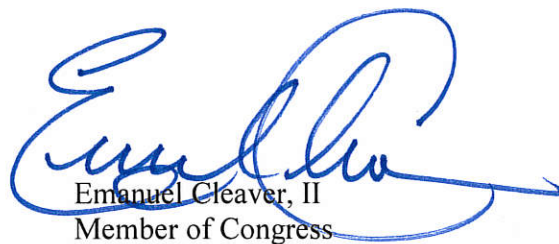
Jason Smith
Member of Congress



Ann Wagner
Member of Congress



Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress



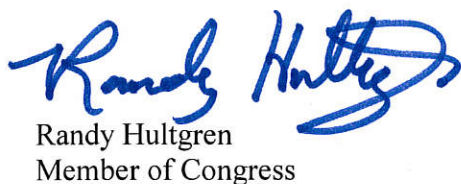
Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Rick Crawford
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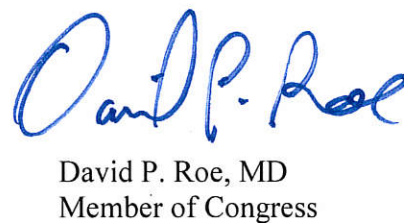
Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
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Tom Emmer
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David P. Roe, MD
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F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress