

BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

MEMBER OF CONGRESS
3RD DISTRICT, MISSOURI

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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June 3, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capital
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger,

I am requesting funding for construction for the Upper Mississippi River - Illinois WW System, IL, IA, MN, MO & WI program, also known as the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP).

The entity to receive funding for this project is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Rock Island District, via the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, located at 1500 Rock Island Dr, Rock Island, IL 61201.

Congress recognized the importance of the Upper Mississippi River—Illinois Waterway System (IL, IA, MN, MO, and WI) (UMRS) in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986 by designating it as the only nationally significant ecosystem and commercial navigation system. Unfortunately, delays in construction continue to threaten the reliability of the overall productivity of the waterway.

Shippers have legitimate concerns about the age of this structure and increases in planned and emergency lock outages. According to a study prepared for the National Waterways Foundation and the U.S. Maritime Administration, estimated costs of an unplanned closure of Lock 25 alone would result in a \$1.57 billion loss to the economy, impacting 132 counties in 17 states. Many farmers and businesses in MO-03 rely on the UMRS to ship crops or goods to market, but America's competitiveness in foreign markets shrinks each year without a new start. With 60 percent of our nation's grain exports traveling on the UMRS, we cannot afford to let this situation worsen. NESP provides the opportunity to address these reliability issues, protect this infrastructure from catastrophic failure and provide roughly 10,000 construction jobs over the lifetime of the program, which is about 20 years of construction.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress