

Now is the Time for America's River...

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEM

September 12, 2008

The Honorable John Kline
1429 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kline:

The coalition of organizations supporting needed improvements to the Upper Mississippi River System greatly appreciates the time you took to meet with some of our members recently.

As expressed during the meeting, the coalition recognizes your leadership in support of the WRDA 2007 veto override, and greatly appreciates your willingness to make the Upper Mississippi River System a priority in the 2009 appropriations process.

We are asking your assistance in continuing to build support in Congress to invest in the future of the Upper Mississippi River System by funding the newly authorized program that integrates navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration. Most immediately, \$50 million as a new start in the Corps' FY 09 construction general account is a critical first step for this innovative program, referred to as the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP).

NESP will improve navigation efficiency by constructing new 1,200 foot locks at Locks and Dams 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25 on the Upper Mississippi, and at Peoria and LaGrange on the Illinois Waterway. Ecosystem improvements include restoration and preservation of more than 100,000 acres of habitat in a manner that is entirely compatible with current navigation practices. The ecosystem improvements will focus on restoring system-wide natural processes that are vital to the health of the river.

We certainly understand that the current fiscal environment and issues surrounding the definition of earmarks present challenges in moving NESP to the construction phase. However, there are three key elements to note about the appropriations for NESP:

- 1) this program has been subject to rigorous evaluation and determined to be a well justified investment in middle America and the Mississippi River corridor;
- 2) this a multi-year regional program comprised of many discrete projects with broad national and regional benefits and thus does not meet any reasonable definition of an "earmark"; and
- 3) a continued commitment to providing adequate funding over the long haul is imperative if the projects in NESP are going to be built in a cost effective and efficient manner.

Thank you again for your commitment to maintaining a viable navigation system and a healthy ecosystem on the upper Mississippi River. We look forward to working with you closely throughout the appropriation process. Coalition members are listed on the backside of this document.

Coalition to Modernize the Upper Mississippi River System

MN Farm Bureau Federation

CHS, Inc.

MN Soybean Growers Assn.

WI Federation of Cooperatives

Upper River Services

The Nature Conservancy WI Chapter

MN Corn Growers Assn.

WI Corn Growers Assn.

Operating Engineers Local 49

IUOE Local 139

No. Cent. States Reg. Council of Carpenters

WI State Council of Carpenters

Upper Mississippi River Basin Assn.

Dairyland Power Cooperative

MN Agri Growth Council

Brennan Marine

Upper Mississippi Waterway Assn.

Waterways Council, Inc.

Now is the Time for America's River...

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEM

September 12, 2008

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

The coalition of organizations supporting needed improvements to the Upper Mississippi River System greatly appreciates the time you took to meet with some of our members recently.

As expressed during the meeting, the coalition recognizes your leadership in support of the WRDA 2007 veto override, and greatly appreciates your willingness to make the Upper Mississippi River System a priority in the 2009 appropriations process.

We are asking your assistance in continuing to build support in Congress to invest in the future of the Upper Mississippi River System by funding the newly authorized program that integrates navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration. Most immediately, \$50 million as a new start in the Corps' FY 09 construction general account is a critical first step for this innovative program, referred to as the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP).

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September 12, 2008

The Honorable Tim Walz
1529 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Walz:

The coalition of organizations supporting needed improvements to the Upper Mississippi River System greatly appreciates the time you took to meet with some of our members in Mankato recently.

As expressed during the meeting, the coalition recognizes your leadership in support of the WRDA 2007 veto override, and greatly appreciates your willingness to make the Upper Mississippi River System a priority in the 2009 appropriations process.

We are asking your assistance in continuing to build support in Congress to invest in the future of the Upper Mississippi River System by funding the newly authorized program that integrates navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration. Most immediately, \$50 million as a new start in the Corps' FY 09 construction general account is a critical first step for this innovative program, referred to as the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP).

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September 12, 2008

The Honorable Herbert H. Kohl
330 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kohl:

The coalition of organizations supporting needed improvements to the Upper Mississippi River System greatly appreciates the time you took to meet with some of our members in LaCrosse recently.

As expressed during the meeting, the coalition recognizes your leadership in support of the WRDA 2007 veto override, and greatly appreciates your willingness to make the Upper Mississippi River System a priority in the 2009 appropriations process.

We are asking your assistance in continuing to build support in Congress to invest in the future of the Upper Mississippi River System by funding the newly authorized program that integrates navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration. Most immediately, \$50 million as a new start in the Corps' FY 09 construction general account is a critical first step for this innovative program, referred to as the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP).

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