

Waterways Council, Inc. · 499 S. Capitol Street, SW · Suite 401 · Washington, DC 20003  
[www.waterwayscouncil.org](http://www.waterwayscouncil.org)

March 2, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Room S128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Room S128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Senate Energy & Water Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
Room S128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Senate Energy & Water Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
Room S128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Cc: Senate Appropriations Committee Members

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Alexander, and Ranking Members Mikulski and Feinstein:

The undersigned 55 organizations support the fiscal 2017 appropriation of Pre-Construction Engineering Design (PED) funding (\$10 million) for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) and urge the committee to approve it. Authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 but not yet under construction, NESP is an unprecedented, multi-purpose program allowing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to integrate management of the Upper Mississippi River System's infrastructure with ecosystem improvements.

This five-state program includes construction of seven modern, 1,200-foot navigation locks at the most congested lock locations (Locks and Dams 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25 on the Upper Mississippi River, and the La Grange and Peoria Locks on the Illinois Waterway). Congress has further authorized smaller-scale navigation efficiency improvements. NESP's authorization includes \$1.948 billion for the new locks and \$256 million for the small-scale efficiency measures; the authorization also includes \$1.717 billion for a 15-year ecosystem restoration program and \$10.42 million annually for its monitoring.

The unique program facilitates both a healthier economy and river ecosystem. It will create and support tens of millions of job-hours for skilled construction trades, as well as expand and sustain jobs at grain elevators, at manufacturing facilities, at ports and terminals and within the tourism sector. By modernizing navigation capacity, NESP will increase the economic potential of the American farmer and bolster the positive trade balance in the agriculture sector. By also investing in our river ecosystems, job opportunities can include marine construction workers, engineers and river scientists. In fact, approximately 300 jobs can be derived from PED funding, with potentially 6,000 jobs from a \$200 million construction appropriation.

While most of America's locks and dams were built in the 1920s-1930s, they must transport 21st century cargoes that fuel our modern economy. The U.S. Department of Transportation projects 1.1 billion tons of increased freight will move on the inland waterways by 2040. This critical transportation supply chain component needs reinvestment and modernization.

Similarly, over the last 150 years, the ecological health of the Upper Mississippi River has degraded from multiple uses and alterations, but it could be substantially improved with NESP's implementation.

Ecological system improvements include modified dam operations, 65 backwater and island enhancements, 29 side channel reconnections, 92 modifications to channel structures, and system ecological monitoring to document river health and support riverine and riparian habitat. Our nation's inland waterways provide capacity, competition, and the most cost-competitive and environmentally friendly transportation option for our American bulk commodities used here in the U.S. and exported to marketplaces worldwide.

We ask you to consider the following facts:

- *Sixty percent of the nation's export-bound grain is transported on the inland waterways.*
- *An effective and efficient water transport system is essential to supply American farmers with fertilizer and inputs for planting seasons.*
- *Farmers depend on our waterways infrastructure to compete and win against producers outside the USA.*
- *Ecosystem restoration improvements will allow the ecological system to rebound and provide improved water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, supporting a \$1.2 billion recreational economy (1990 number).*
- *The Panama Canal expansion, when completed, will create opportunities for increased American trade, but not if our channels are not dredged and our locks and dams are not functioning.*
- *More than a half-million American jobs depend on operational ports and inland waterways.*
- *The waterways are vital to our manufacturing sectors and to the construction industry.*
- *American consumers benefit from transportation cost-savings made possible by the inland waterways; for every \$1 invested in our inland waterways, \$14 is returned in national benefits.*
- *NESP will restore valuable river habitat such as islands, flowing channels and marshes. Marshes provide floodwater storage, provide infiltration for water supply and process excess nutrients in the water to reduce the cost of water delivered to communities that use the river as a drinking water source.*

Our organizations respectfully request that \$10 million be appropriated specifically toward engineering and design to get this important program closer to construction-ready status in fiscal 2017. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Soybean Association  
Archer Daniels Midland Company  
Arkansas Soybean Association  
Associated General Contractors of America  
American Waterways Operators  
Big River Coalition  
Bunge

Cargill, Inc.  
CHS, Inc.  
Colorado Corn Growers Association  
Corn Producers Association of Texas  
Corn Refiners Association  
Deere & Company  
Ducks Unlimited  
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois  
GROWMARK  
Illinois Corn Growers Association  
Indiana Soybean Alliance  
Indiana Corn Growers Association  
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental & Reinforcing Iron Workers  
Iowa Corn Growers Association  
Kentucky Corn Growers Association  
Kentucky Soybean Association  
Laborers' District Council Chicago and Vicinity LDCLMCC  
Laborers' International Union of North America  
Mid-America Port Commission  
Mid-America Intermodal Authority Port District  
Minnesota AgriGrowth Council  
Minnesota Grain & Feed Association  
Missouri Corn Growers Association  
Missouri Soybean Association  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Grain & Feed Association  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
North America's Building Trades Unions  
North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters  
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association  
Pike and Scott County Farm Bureaus  
St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council  
The Nature Conservancy  
Two Rivers Economic Development District  
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of  
the United States, Canada & Australia  
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association  
Upper Mississippi Waterway Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
Waterways Council, Inc.  
Waterways Journal  
Wisconsin Corn Growers Association

The Nature Conservancy  
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

BUNGE



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The American Waterways Operators