

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to request your support for navigation infrastructure improvements and ecological restoration on the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS) - the Upper Mississippi & Illinois Rivers. Specifically, we are requesting that you include in your FY 14 Budget support for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP), authorized in the Waters Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007.

During your recent State of the Union Address to Congress, you called for repairing our nation's infrastructure as well as the need to protect our environment for future generations. NESP will do both of these things. NESP is an integrated effort born of more than a decade of study to ensure more efficient flow of barge traffic, as well as restoration of the river's ecosystem.

The UMRS is the only river basin in the U.S. recognized by an act of Congress as both a nationally significant commercial navigation system and river ecosystem. The integration of NESP's dual-purpose plan for navigation enhancement and ecosystem restoration that was codified in the 2007 WRDA is essential to balancing the needs of the environment and the economy.

Ensuring that the locks and dams on the UMRS are capable of providing effective traffic flow is critically important to the competitiveness of our agriculture and manufacturing industries, and ultimately the consumer. This infrastructure, which is now entering into its eighth decade (or older in some cases) is in extreme need of repair. NESP has a real opportunity to be a model for constructing navigation infrastructure, and we look forward to this potential being realized for the benefit of the region and the nation. Moreover, there are NESP projects that are ready for construction within 1-year. This means that positive impacts on the economy and the environment can be realized in the near-term.

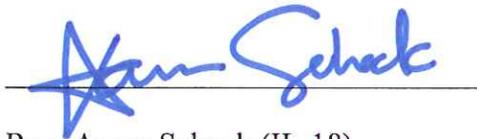
The UMRS also provides for communities who rely on the system for clean water and its other abundant environmental benefits for both human consumption and the health of riverine habitat. NESP details more than 225 ecosystem restoration projects in the program authorized in WRDA 2007 to reconnect floodplain habitat, environmental water level management, restoration of side channels and backwaters, and shoreline protection.

Implementation of NESP's dual-purpose plan is endorsed by the basin states, along with a wide and diverse coalition of stakeholders which continue to work to support this vital and overdue program. The

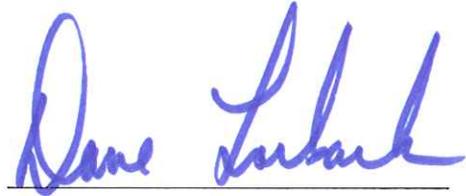
agriculture producers, manufacturers, commercial navigation industry, shipping entities, organized labor, economic development groups, and environmental and conservation interests join a wide array of other stakeholders in declaring their firm support of NESP.

We are hopeful that you will recognize the importance of NESP to the economy and ecosystem along the UMRS in your FY14 budget. Thank you for considering our request.

Respectfully,



Rep. Aaron Schock (IL-18)



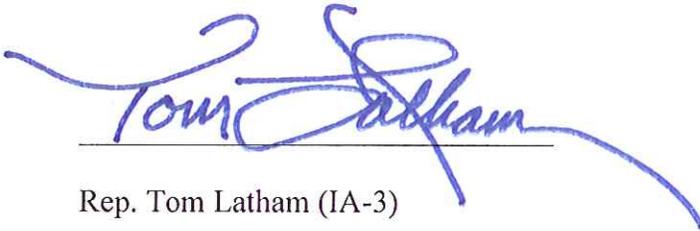
Rep. David Loebach (IA-02)



Rep. Adam Kinzinger (IL-16)



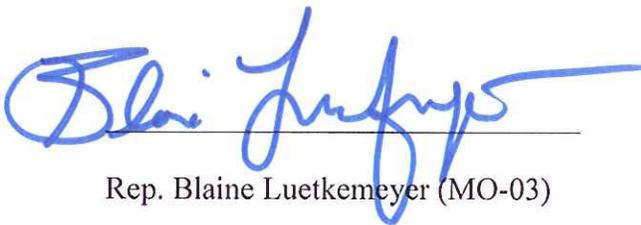
Rep. William L. Enyart (IL-12)



Rep. Tom Latham (IA-3)



Rep. Timothy J. Walz (MN-01)



Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO-03)



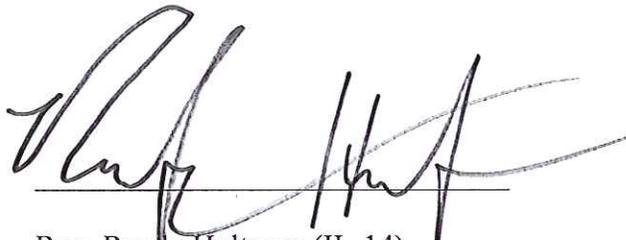
Rep. Bobby L. Rush (IL-01)



Rep. Rodney Davis (IL-13)



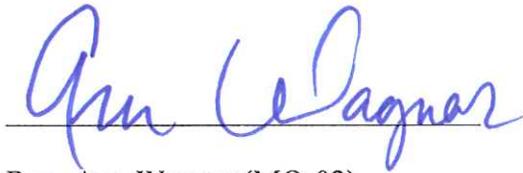
Rep. Ron Kind (WI-03)



Rep. Randy Hultgren (IL-14)



Rep. Cheri Bustos (IL-17)



Rep. Ann Wagner (MO-02)



Rep. Bruce L. Braley (IA-01)



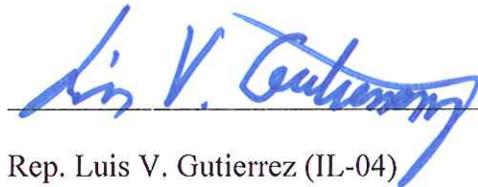
Rep. Steve Stivers (OH-15)



Rep. Daniel Lipinski (IL-03)



Rep. Bill Foster (IL-11)



Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (IL-04)



Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay (MO-01)



Rep. Betty McCollum (MN-04)



Rep. Sam Graves (MO-06)

CC: Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Jeffrey Zients, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget