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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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May 15, 2013

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall II  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member Rahall,

As you know, earlier today the Senate passed S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act. I applaud the Senate for moving forward on this critical legislation, and I am hopeful that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will also soon move legislation forward. While I am encouraged by the Senate's actions, I am concerned that the legislation does not adequately address the crippling navigation infrastructure on the Upper Mississippi River.

Having seen the locks and dams on the Mississippi first-hand, received updates from the Army Corps of Engineers, and met with community stakeholders, I am deeply concerned. It is clear the locks and dams are deteriorating, causing increased maintenance costs for the Army Corps of Engineers and threatening economic impacts to the region. Recognizing the importance of the Mississippi River to not just Iowa and the region, but to the entire country, I urge the Committee to address the needed modernization of the Upper Mississippi River navigation system in upcoming Water Resources Development legislation.

It's no secret that the infrastructure on the Upper Mississippi River is badly in need of repair. Many of the locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi River were built in the 1930s and are well past their design life. Because of their age, more frequent and costly repairs are needed, adding to the many band-aids already in place. Long delays can also often be felt by shippers as these antiquated locks and dams struggle to keep pace with the modernized shipping industry.

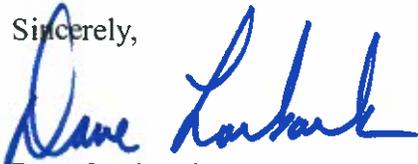
For years, the Mississippi River and its tributaries have played a vital role in our country's commerce, connecting the extended Midwest with markets throughout the world. Increasingly, the Upper Mississippi is becoming even more valuable for our commerce while remaining one of the most unattended to stretches of river. During the recession, our agricultural sector has remained one of the few bright spots in our economy. The Mississippi River is a significant reason for this, allowing productive and innovative farmers from places like Iowa to get their products to new and growing world markets. Additionally, while I hear from the region's significant manufacturing base on the importance of the River, I also believe the River is playing

a key role in attracting new businesses and manufacturing - as well as manufacturing returning from overseas - to the region.

With the completion of the expansion of the Panama Canal only a few years away, now is the time to make the long overdue investments in the Mississippi River navigation system to help ensure continued American competitiveness. Hearing from many stakeholders in my district, I believe the right options are available to address these critical issues. These options include working with the shipping industry to increase the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, exploring public-private partnerships on infrastructure funding, and fully re-authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers' Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). I strongly encourage you to consider these commonsense, budget conscious options in any WRDA reauthorization.

As your Committee considers a Water Resources Development bill, a full view of our critical water resources needs to be taken, and the link between the Mississippi River and the strong economic growth in the Upper Mississippi region should be recognized and addressed. Thank you for your time and attention to our concerns and the concerns of business and constituents in our districts.

Sincerely,



Dave Loeb sack  
Member of Congress