

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 22, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney,

We write to express our strong support for efforts to increase the competitiveness of our inland navigation system and improve the ecosystem. As such, we respectfully request that you include sufficient funding to continue preconstruction engineering and design (PED) for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) in the Administration's fiscal year 2019 budget request. In addition, we request that this amount be included in the Army Corps of Engineers' (the Corps) 2018 Work Plan so that work can begin immediately.

In 2007, Congress recognized the national significance of the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS) and authorized NESP to ensure that the nation continues to benefit from this vital resource. Further investment in NESP would strengthen infrastructure and navigation for the entire river and recognize the significance of the UMRS ecosystem to surrounding communities and wildlife. With appropriate funding, many NESP projects could be ready for construction within a year, immediately improving the economy and environment, and affirm the importance of the program.

Our inland waterways are key to U.S. competitiveness in the global economy. With the expansion of the world food and energy needs, the Mississippi River is poised to be more important than ever. The river already moves large volumes of agricultural and energy products between U.S. markets and ports, and serves as the country's busiest waterway. However, the overwhelming majority of UMRS infrastructure was constructed in the 1930s and has exceeded its design life by decades, causing closure and limiting overall capacity. Improvements are necessary.

NESP has widespread bipartisan support from multiple states as well as the support of industry, labor, and environmental interests. We urge you to include sufficient funding for NESP in the Administration's fiscal year 2019 budget request and to prioritize construction in the Corps' 2018 Work Plan in order to ensure that this project moves forward.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincere Regards,



Roy Blunt
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Dick Durbin

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Chuck Grassley

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

John Kennedy

John Kennedy
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Claire McCaskill

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Roger Wicker

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

cc: Mr. Ryan A. Fisher, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers