

Senators Announce \$829 Million In Funding To Modernize Lock And Dams On The Upper Mississippi & Illinois Rivers

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WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Roy Blunt (R-MO), and Chuck Grassley (R-IA), along with U.S. Representatives Cheri Bustos (D-IL-17) and Ashley Hinson (R-IA-01) announced that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has allocated \$829.1

million in funding from the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (IIJA) for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) on the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS). Specifically, the funding will be used to complete the modernization of Lock & Dam 25, including the construction of a new 1,200 foot lock, as well as an environmental restoration project at Lock & Dam 22 and other small-scale ecosystem and navigation projects in the region.

Today's announcement comes one month after the lawmakers sent a bicameral, bipartisan [letter](#) to the USACE to prioritize the funding for construction of NESP on the UMRS with the \$2.5 billion for inland waterways provided in the IIJA.

“For years, I’ve advocated for the modernization of Illinois’ locks and dams, which are integral to our state’s economy and in desperate need of repair. Today’s announcement is the beginning of a new era for waterway infrastructure and environmental restoration in Illinois,” said Durbin. “I’m encouraged that President Biden shares my urgency to improve our waterways by providing more than \$800 million in federal funding for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program. This funding will restore our environment, modernize our locks, help Illinois agriculture better compete around the globe, and create thousands of jobs. I’m looking forward to this federal investment’s positive economic impact on Illinois and communities up and down the Mississippi River for years to come.”

“Protecting and strengthening our inland waterways, especially the Mississippi River, is critical to growing our local economies and protecting the health and safety of our communities,” Duckworth said. “I’m so pleased to see the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program that I’ve worked to support getting the resources it needs through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, because it will help protect our environment, modernize our water infrastructure and provide good-paying, local jobs for the region.”

“This investment to improve the safety and navigability of the Mississippi River is great news for farmers, businesses, and Missouri’s economy,” said Blunt. “I’m glad the USACE will have significant resources to advance projects that will make it easier and less expensive for farmers and businesses to get their goods to market. Modernizing our waterways will continue to be a top priority in my efforts to ensure our state has the tools it needs to lead the way in a global economy.”

“Iowa’s agriculture, manufacturing and shipping industries rely on a functioning and efficient lock and dam system along the Mississippi River to move goods. It’s an issue I often hear about during my 99 county meetings and regularly raise with the Army Corps of Engineers, so I’m pleased to report that they’ll be investing more than \$829 million

for updates to these locks and dams. When I voted for the bipartisan infrastructure bill, I was voting for exactly this type of federal support for critical infrastructure that Iowans depend on,” Grassley said.

“Today’s announcement is a huge win for our economy, jobs, American farmers, trade and the environment,” said Bustos. “This years-long effort to modernize the locks and dams of the Mississippi will help our agricultural producers bring tons of goods to market faster, increase trade by speeding up the transport of American products, spur job creation, alleviate supply chain stress and help reduce transportation emissions. With this funding, we’re bringing taxpayer dollars home and revolutionizing how efficiently we utilize our waterways.”

“The lock and dam system along the Upper Mississippi River is critical to Iowa’s agriculture economy and our country’s entire supply chain — this landmark investment will be game-changing for Iowans and communities along the Mississippi River like Dubuque. Over 60 percent of our nation’s grain exports travel through this lock and dam system, and it is a massive economic engine for the entire state. That’s why I helped lead a bipartisan group of my colleagues in urging the Administration to prioritize funding for these essential upgrades. I’ll always fight to ensure Iowans’ taxpayer dollars are reinvested at home in Iowa,” said Hinson.

Originally authorized in the *Water Resources Development Act of 2007*, NESP will modernize and expand seven outdated locks at the most congested lock locations along the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers as well as fund nearly \$2 billion in ecosystem restoration.

The UMRS transports more than 60 percent of America’s corn and soybeans, is home to 25 percent of North America’s fish species, and is a globally important flyway for 40 percent of North America’s migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. Enhancing the reliability and capacity of the seven highest-use and most delayed locks on the UMRS through NESP ensures that the most environmentally-conscious and safe method of transporting bulk commodities will continue for the next generation.

NESP will create almost 50 million person-hours of living wage construction jobs. A 2019 study released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed that rebuilding NESP locks would inject \$72 billion additional dollars into the nation’s GDP.

In the Fiscal Year 2022 Energy & Water appropriations bill, Durbin secured \$45.1 million for the Army Corps to fund the first NESP construction on Lock and Dam 25 and fund environmental restoration projects.