



Inland Waterways

Overview

Our country's inland navigation system plays a critical role in our nation's economy, moving more than a billion tons of domestic commerce valued at more than \$300 billion. More than 1 billion bushels of grain (about 60 percent of all grain exports) move to export markets via the inland waterways each year, accounting for \$8.5 billion in exports.

Inland waterways relieve congestion on our already over-crowded highways and railways that run through cities. One jumbo barge has the same capacity as 58 trucks or 15 rail cars. For a typical 15-barge tow on our nation's rivers, that is equal to 870 trucks in just one barge movement.

Additionally, there are significant environmental benefits of the lock system. The backwaters created by the lock and dam system support over 40 percent of the migratory water fowl and fish breeding grounds and are home to more than 500 miles of wildlife refuge. In addition, more than \$1 billion are generated each year in recreational use – fishing, hunting and tourism.

Upper Mississippi and Illinois Waterways

Investment in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Waterways has not kept pace with its needs and is deteriorating. The lock system is approaching 80 years old, and cannot accommodate modern barging practices, which use 1,100 foot barge-tows. Many of the locks are only 600 feet long, forcing barges to use the time-consuming and dangerous double-locking procedure.

Corn growers have been long-time advocates for improvements to our inland waterway system and have fought for passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). We have sought partners with industry, labor organizations, and environmental advocates building a broad coalition of support for legislation that would authorize a fifteen year project that includes the construction of seven new locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers as well as immediate implementation of small-scale measures and the creation of a major ecosystem restoration program.

By 2020, the failure to build seven new 1,200 foot locks will result in \$562 million in lost farm income, annually – \$246 million from lost exports and \$316 million from lower prices and decreased domestic demand. To farmers everywhere, the choice is clear. Investment in new locks is necessary if we are to have a strong agriculture economy and meet the demands of a growing world population.

WRDA is also a jobs bill – construction of seven needed locks would create jobs for many skilled trades throughout the Midwest for years. The Corps of Engineers estimates that over 48 million man-hours of work will be required to complete the new lock chambers. The reinvestment potential to our communities from this opportunity is enormous.

WRDA received overwhelming bi-partisan support in both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the 109th Congress. Let's finish the job.

Action Needed

- Completion and passage of a WRDA in the 110th Congress that includes lock modernization and ecosystem restoration on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Waterways
- Sufficient funding for pre-construction design and engineering work for the new locks.

For more information, contact NCGA at 202.628.7001

or visit our web site at: www.ncga.com