



Transportation

Overview

Corn growers depend on reliable, cost-effective and efficient transportation - whether by barge, truck or rail - to receive farm inputs and to deliver their crops. Competition among these modes of transportation helps farmers receive the best price for their crops, meet their customers' demand for timely delivery of products and successfully compete with foreign producers. Without a competitive transportation system, the promise of expanded trade and commercial growth is empty, job opportunities are lost, and we will be unprepared for the challenges of this new century.

Upper Mississippi and Illinois Waterways

Every year, more than 1 billion bushels of grain (about 60 percent of all grain exports) move to export markets via the Mississippi River. Unfortunately, investment in the inland waterway system has not kept pace with its needs and is deteriorating. The lock system on the Upper Mississippi River is 60-70 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.

By 2020, the failure to build seven new 1,200 foot locks will result in \$562 million in lost farm income, annually -- \$264 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.

There are significant environmental benefits of modernizing 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.

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.

Action Needed

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