

Senators Press for Action to Keep Navigation Flowing on the Mississippi River

Written by Grassley Press

Monday, 19 November 2012 13:45

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WASHINGTON – Senator Chuck Grassley today joined other senators from states along the Mississippi River to urge the Army Corps of Engineers to remove impediments to navigation on the Mississippi River, as well as ensure water flow from the Missouri River does not impede Mississippi River navigation.

Grassley, along with Senators Tom Harkin, Roy Blunt, Dick Durbin, Mary Landrieu, Lamar Alexander, Amy Klobuchar, David Vitter, Claire McCaskill, Mark Kirk, Mark Pryor, Roger Wicker, Al Franken, Thad Cochran and John Boozman requested the action from the Army Corps of Engineers in an effort to keep commerce flowing on the river.

“The drought resulted in low water levels that have created challenging shipping conditions in some spots along the river for grain and other exports,” Grassley said. “The action we’re requesting is not unprecedented, and could have a major and positive impact on the economy up and down the river.”

Here is a copy of the text of the letter. [Click here](#) for a signed copy of the letter.

November 16, 2012

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The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy

Assistant Secretary for Civil Works

108 Army Pentagon

Room 3E446

Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Secretary Darcy:

We are requesting immediate action to prevent an impending disruption to inland waterways navigation caused in large part by the 2012 drought particularly in the Missouri River Basin. A very large share of the flows into the Mississippi River at St. Louis are derived from the Missouri River.

On or about November 23, 2012, the United States Army Corps of Engineers may begin to impound Missouri River water in accordance with the annual operating plan for the Missouri River. This action will lead to a crisis on the Mississippi River when commerce is interrupted due to low water conditions that prevent the maintenance of the congressionally-authorized 9-foot channel.

Fortunately, we understand that the Corps has the ability to remove impediments to navigation by demolishing rock pinnacles – particularly at Thebes, Illinois – in order to avert the looming crisis. We urge the Corps of Engineers to undertake this work as soon as possible. If authority

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can be found, we also request that the impoundment of Missouri River water be delayed until the rock work is completed so that navigation can be maintained. Our support for those flows is with an understanding that no other beneficial use would be seriously impacted and that any deficit of water for other various uses would be repaid from future navigation flows. We believe that the USACE Master Manual permits such deviations.

The Mississippi River is vital to commerce for agriculture and many other goods, including our ability to export our goods. If the river channel is not maintained, there will be a loss of jobs, income to many businesses and farmers, and an adverse impact to the economy of the region as a whole.

We encourage you to take action to preserve this crucial artery of commerce. We appreciate your consideration of this important issue.