

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 2, 2025

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2187 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: \$7.5 million for the Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study, funded under E&W:
USACE: MR&T: Investigations**

Dear Chairman Fleischmann and Ranking Member Kaptur:

Thank you for supporting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) water infrastructure programs and projects. As you craft the FY2026 appropriations bill for Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies, we encourage you to provide at least \$7.5 million for the Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study (LMRCMS) to support navigation, flood risk management, and ecosystem restoration needs in the Mississippi River and Tributaries system.

With enactment of the 2020 Water Resources Development Act, Congress created a historic opportunity to reevaluate the operation and management of the Lower Mississippi River, considering modernization, resilient solutions, and a multi-benefit approach. The elimination of funding for this study in the USACE FY 2025 spend plan caused a suspension of all activity and a loss of momentum toward completing the study on time. Funding must be restored to continue investigations and developing construction and operations recommendations.

For 85 years, the Lower River's management system has remained unchanged and unresponsive to evolving commerce and environmental needs. The LMRCMS is a pivotal opportunity to align navigation efficiency and safety, flood control systems, and restoration efforts to foster a healthier, safer Lower River system that benefits all stakeholders and river communities. USACE has expressed a capability of \$7.5 million for FY26, which will allow the study to resume progress toward the \$25 million authorized for the five for initial investigations and the development of recommendations.

The study to date has completed critical engineering and planning work for the nation to provide a more resilient Mississippi River & Tributaries (MR&T) system in the future. Recent extreme high and low water events are creating stressors on the system. This study will propose solutions for the future dynamic operation of structures within the system for successful flood risk management, navigational security, and ecosystem protection. Prior to the recent funding pause, the study was on track to be completed by December 2027. It has reached the final array of alternatives, which includes constructable measures, tiered studies to tackle large-scale issues within the system, and other solutions for stakeholders to implement. Funding is needed to develop the Tentatively Selected Plan and recommended action to the Chief of Engineers and Congress.

The anticipated recommendations are necessary to fill key knowledge and action gaps across seven states from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to the Gulf of America (including Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana). The states have made significant contributions to the study team through time, resources, and the articulation of project priorities. These investments must yield outcomes without further delay. The study will support the thriving Lower Mississippi River economy, which directly generates over \$151.7 billion in annual revenue and supports more than 585,000 jobs.

Studies such as the Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Study have intentional, congressionally determined timelines and budget authorizations that are threatened by inconsistent and reduced annual funding. Delays can lead to obsolete analysis and planning and cost overruns. We urge the Subcommittee to support uninterrupted funding for the study to reduce costs over time, meet Congress's goals, and support Lower River states and communities.

Thank you in advance for your support of this indispensable study.

Sincerely,



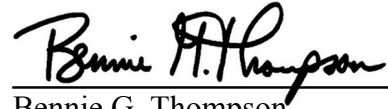
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Member of Congress



Mike Ezell
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Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress