

## **Sub-committee on Energy and Water Development**

### **Member Day Testimony**

**Tuesday, April 9, 2019**

#### **Congressman Jim Hagedorn (MN-01)**

Madam Chair (Marcy Kaptur) and Ranking Member (Mike Simpson),

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you this morning. The topics I wish to highlight during this hearing are vital to constituents in my District.

Minnesota's 1<sup>st</sup> District is one of the top 10 agricultural districts in the country. Having a vibrant agricultural economy is vital to the economic well-being of southern Minnesota in general and the rural areas of our District in particular. An efficient and reliable transportation system is critical to a healthy agricultural economy, and inland waterways are a key component of that system.

The Mississippi River, which begins its journey in Minnesota, is the nation's most important waterway when it comes to the transportation of commodities. Fifty-seven percent of the cargo on the Mississippi is agricultural products. It is estimated that over half of the U.S.'s corn exports and over a third of the soybean exports originate in states bordering the upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers and move via these transport arteries to lower Mississippi River ports. This is not surprising considering waterway transport costs are about half of ground transport costs.

It's evident that keeping our nation's waterway transportation system modernized and maintained is essential to our nation's economic health.

I am before you today to ask for and encourage two funding requests with regards to our nation's waterways system. This system carries almost 600 million tons of cargo to and from 38 states including a significant portion of our nation's agricultural products. However, much of the physical infrastructure of our inland waterways system is aging and critically in need of maintenance. Commercial navigation locks have a design life of 50 years and yet over half of the existing locks on our nation's waterways are more than 60 years old.

Therefore, first I respectfully request this Sub-committee to appropriate an Army Corps of Engineers Operating & Maintenance account funding level of at least \$3,740,000,000 for FY 2020 for the operation and maintenance activities of the Corps including those affecting inland and coastal navigation throughout the nation. This appropriation request is the same level signed into law in the final FY 2019 Energy & Water Appropriations bill. It is my belief that investing in the maintenance of our infrastructure today will benefit taxpayers in the future.

Second, I would ask and encourage this Sub-committee provide \$10,000,000 in FY 2020 from the Investigations account of the Corp of Engineers to continue pre-construction engineering and design for the Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability Program – Upper Mississippi River & Illinois Water-Way System as authorized in title VIII of the Later Resources Development Act Of 2007. This funding will support continued PED funding for already authorized projects at Lock & Dam 25 on the Mississippi River in Missouri and at the LaGrange Lock and Dam on the Illinois Waterway in Illinois. Both projects

have been identified as priority authorized projects in the Inland Marine Transportation Systems Capital Projects Business Model, the joint U.S. Corp of Engineers-Industry Capital Development Plan from April 13, 2010.

In closing, I would like to emphasize again the vital role inland waterways play in transporting our nation's commodities in a cost-effective manner. Hard-working southern Minnesotan farmers abundantly produce some of the finest agricultural products in the world. A well-maintained inland waterways system is critical to their ability to distribute those products to the nation and the world efficiently and effectively. I encourage my colleagues to fully fund these appropriation requests as submitted.

Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member, for the opportunity to speak with you today and I yield back.