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Testimony to Subcommittee for Water Resources & Environment,
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Re: Water Resources Development Act of 2024

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding WRDA 2024 and its importance to Missouri River stakeholders. I'm Shane Kinne, Executive Director of the Coalition to Protect the Missouri River.

CPMR was established in 2001, and is made up of more than 30 members in six states and supports the responsible management of Missouri River resources, as well as the maintenance and enhancement of congressionally authorized purposes of the river, including flood control, navigation and water supply. We also support science-based habitat restoration for endangered or threatened species, provided that management actions are responsibly conducted and properly balanced with our members' interests.

We are in a very important time period for the Missouri River. While there are challenges, there is much momentum, both for flood control as well as navigation on the Missouri River. Much of this is due to recently passed WRDA bills that authorized important, generational projects and studies that, if properly executed, will improve the lives of those that live and work in the lower Missouri River basin. In order for us to continue to capture and capitalize on that momentum, it is critical that Congress continues to pass WRDA bills consistently and on-time.

The historic flood of 2019 caused billions of dollars in damages in the states of Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri with much of that in Missouri's 6th District.

WRDA 2020 authorized the Lower Missouri River Flood Resiliency Study, allowing our region to take a new look at flood control along the Missouri River. This study will focus on local solutions and increased resiliency. As part of this study, it is critical that stakeholders begin to see progress as soon as possible. Passing a WRDA bill in 2024 will allow us to take a step forward now on agreed-upon solutions, while the full study progresses.

In addition, between disaster funding from the 2019 flood and 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, over \$469 million is being invested in the Missouri River navigation channel. We are only halfway through this project and it is already having a staggering impact on the resiliency of the channel. Several navigators have shared that they have been able to move boats during the past two years of low water, when they previously wouldn't have been able to.

Along with this success, WRDA 2020 also authorized a Missouri River navigation resiliency study that is allowing us to take a fresh look at a broad range of factors that could improve resiliency of navigation on the river. The timing of this study with the federal investment into the river is critical.

Commercial traffic is increasing on the Missouri River to levels we haven't seen in decades. The Port of Blencoe, located at MOR 680.5, Blencoe Iowa was opened by farmer-owned NEW Cooperative in 2021. Having three successful navigation seasons north of Omaha, Nebraska has allowed NEW Cooperative to reduce their truck miles on Iowa highways by approximately 249,491 miles annually. Prior to opening this port, NEW Cooperative transported fertilizer from the Mississippi River, all the way across the state of Iowa in the spring. The operation of this facility allows the efficient movement of fertilizer and additional commodities up the Missouri River, and also allows barges to be reloaded with products such as soybean meal, dried distillers grain, soybeans, corn, and scrap iron to ship back south. This is just one example of success stories we are seeing.

Passing a WRDA bill in 2024 is critical to leveraging this success into long-term resiliency. Not just resiliency of the Missouri River, but also the Mississippi River. Flows from the Missouri River are critical to shipping on the middle Mississippi River between St. Louis, Missouri and Cairo, Illinois, highlighting their national importance.

CPMR has shaped our WRDA 2024 priorities to promote continued progress in these areas.

Our priorities include;

- Shifting the previously mentioned Missouri River Navigation Resiliency Study from 50/50 cost share study to a 75/25 cost share. This study will have national impact to

shipping reliability and this cost share shift will provide certainty to it's completion while maintaining stakeholder input.

- Bank erosion and land loss continue to be a challenge for landowners and also threaten the viability of levee systems. WRDA 2022 included a pilot program to address this issue. In WRDA 2024 we are advocating to expand this to a permanent authority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address critical bank erosion.
- In WRDA 2022 the USACE was required to inventory non-USACE federal lands that would physically qualify for Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project mitigation acres. CPMR supports movement toward ensuring those lands are counted in the 166,000 acres as well as looking at what state lands should qualify.

These are just a few of our WRDA priorities. We will submit our full list as part of the record. They include additional items to promote navigation and flood risk resiliency while also protecting private property and businesses that operate on the Missouri River.

Failing to pass a WRDA bill in 2024 will mean missed opportunities at a critical time to support resiliency of flood control, navigation and water supply uses in the region. Thank you for your efforts to pass this legislation and thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.