

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



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May 30, 2019

The Honorable Kim Reynolds
Governor, State of Iowa
State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319-0001

Dear Governor Reynolds:

I write to you today soliciting your support in finalizing federal funding for deepening the lower Mississippi River Ship Channel (MRSC) to 50 feet from the existing 45 feet.

With the expansion of the Panama Canal, it has become imperative to improve the access for larger vessels to our lower Mississippi River deep-water ports system. The MRSC deepening project will enable and expand global markets for your farmers, manufacturers and citizens that depend on import and export of goods. A deepened Mississippi River will be an *economic super highway*. The River and its tributaries account for over \$750 billion of the nation's economy and more than 2.4 million jobs. According to recent research by the Soy Transportation Coalition, the 256-mile stretch of the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico accounts for 60 percent of U.S. soybean exports, along with 59 percent of corn exports – by far the leading export region for both commodities. One foot of additional draft will accommodate approximately \$1 million in additional cargo per vessel. This will enable shippers to maximize use of the Mississippi River and its inland tributaries versus the more expensive land bridges to the coastal ports.

In studying the project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined a 7.2 to 1 benefit-to-cost ratio, which does not include an anticipated \$40 billion in new facility investments; a \$125 million return to state and federal governments; flood mitigation; or beneficial dredge material to protect the coast and entryway to the river.

The project is approved and awaiting funding from OMB. As the “non-federal sponsor” for the river, Louisiana is providing the required matching funds. Therefore, my specific request is to ask you to send a letter to your congressional delegation urging their support in finalizing federal funding. The attached letter provides suggested language.

If you have any questions, please contact me, DOTD Secretary Shawn Wilson or Louisiana Commissioner of Multimodal Commerce, Thomas Clark at (225) 379-1200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards".

John Bel Edwards
Governor