

August 31, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

The undersigned organizations respectfully request the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (WRDA) conference report be scheduled for floor consideration immediately upon your return from August Recess. After many long hours of hard work, conferees have produced a meaningful and responsible legislative package that addresses issues such as environmental restoration, navigation, flood control, hurricane protection, water supply, irrigation and beach nourishment and recreation. Improvements in these areas will serve us well in the years to come.

Our country's inland navigation system plays a critical role in our economy, moving more than 1 billion tons of domestic commerce valued at more than \$300 billion. More than 1 billion bushels of grain (approximately 60 percent of all grain exports) move to export markets via the inland waterways each year, accounting for \$8.5 billion in exports.

For continued success, U.S. farmers need efficient transportation networks, which is why we have been long-time advocates for improvements to our inland waterway system. WRDA is crucial to farmers who depend on the inland waterway system to deliver their crops to the global marketplace and to businesses who rely on the system to move their raw materials and products. Specifically, WRDA would authorize a 15-year project that includes modernization of seven locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Additionally, WRDA includes a balanced, science-based environmental restoration program that recognizes the river's environmental value and potential.

For far too long we have lived off the investment of our ancestors. It is time to provide necessary and long-overdue infrastructure and environmental improvements to our nation's waterways. After years of work and months of extensive negotiations, we look forward to final passage of the WRDA conference report.

We appreciate your support and stand ready to work with you in sending this important piece of legislation to the president for his signature.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Soybean Association
Corn Refiners Association
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
Renewable Fuels Association
The Fertilizer Institute