



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, AUGUST 1, 2022:

Statement on Senate Passage of the Water Resources Development Act

Mayors of the Mississippi River Celebrate Hallmark Ecosystem Project Included in Senate WRDA, Congratulate Partners

MRCTI Mayors worked hard across multiple states with close partners Ducks Unlimited and Senator Boozman to include an ecosystem restoration program demonstration project for the lower Mississippi River. Titled *The Lower Mississippi River Demonstration Program* (Section 406), this project will assemble a comprehensive plan for the lower Mississippi River Valley that develops projects to enhance and protect the living resources of the Corridor.

"I want to thank Senator Boozman (AR) for his vision and leadership in making this critical project part of the Water Resources Development Act. Support from Mayors across the ten-state corridor for this work in both the House and Senate has resulted in a major victory for our region," emphasized **Kevin Smith, Mayor of Helena-West Helena, AR and MRCTI Arkansas State Chair**.

"This is an important step to improving critical water infrastructure projects for Arkansas and the entire ten-state Mississippi River Corridor. The ecological and economic integrity of this working river is paramount to the security of our nation. I am pleased to work closely with Ducks Unlimited, the Mayors of MRCTI and other partners through the leadership of Mayor Kevin Smith of Helena-West Helena Arkansas to advance a new and important project for the lower Mississippi Valley," said **John Boozman, United States Senator (AR)**.

"We also want to thank both Senator Wicker (MS) and Senator Cassidy (LA) for their support of this effort to establish ecosystem restoration as a federal project across the entire Mississippi River Corridor. This provision gets us closer than ever before to managing the whole Mississippi River as one living system," explained **Erick Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS and MRCTI Co-Chair**.

"We applaud the Senate in passing WRDA which includes a priority of the Safeguarding the Mississippi River Together Act (HR 4729) that was spearheaded by ambassador Andrew Young," said **Memphis mayor, Jim Strickland, MRCTI Co-Chair**. "This (WRDA) legislation allows us to better protect and preserve this vital resource."

"We have enjoyed the benefits of an ecosystem restoration program within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers here in the Upper Mississippi River for many years. The Mayors have been working together from my region here in Minnesota all the way to New Orleans to extend natural infrastructure deployment through such efforts at the SMRT Act.

We are so excited the environmental program of the upper river is one step closer to being implemented in the lower corridor to bring the benefits of disaster resilience, cleaner water, habitat recovery, and economic sustainability for all ten states and 124 cities," said **Laurie Elliott, Mayor of Newport, MN.**

The Senate WRDA bill now moves to conference with the House version before final congressional passage expected at some point this fall.

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[**The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative**](#) is a coalition of 101 mayors from across the Mississippi River Basin, which spans nearly a third of the country. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. More than 60 billion gallons of fresh water is withdrawn from the river daily. The River's resources support 1.5 million jobs and create \$496.7 billion in annual revenue.

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