



May 3, 2024

Congressman Sam Graves
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: MISSOURI RIVER, SIOUX CITY TO THE MOUTH, IA, KS, MO & NE project (BSNP)

Dear Congressman Graves,

The Coalition to Protect the Missouri River (CPMR) is a diverse organization that represents those that live and work on and adjacent to the Missouri River. Our membership includes Missouri River ports, navigation interests, water supply, agriculture groups and more.

As part of the appropriations process, we write to request your support for full funding of the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project (BSNP) Operations and Maintenance (O&M) line item at \$41,934,000 for fiscal year 2025. This number represents the full capability of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the project.

For many decades the Missouri River BSNP has suffered from a backlog of deferred maintenance leading to navigation structures that were in disrepair and out of design specifications. This created an unpredictable and unsafe channel for navigation, negatively impacting commerce from Sioux City, Iowa all the way to St. Louis, Missouri.

Thanks to recent, historic investments from disaster funding and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation, over \$469 million is currently being invested into the BSNP. While this investment is approximately halfway complete, it has already had a significant impact on the resiliency and reliability of the channel. In the low water years of 2022 and 2023, operators were able to continue navigating the river thanks to these investments. Pre-investment it would have been very likely the river would have experienced closures or significantly reduced drafts, limiting the economic viability of moving products on the river.

For example, the Port of Blencoe, Iowa at Missouri River mile 680.5 was opened by farmer-owned NEW Cooperative in 2021. They have had three successful navigation seasons north of Omaha, Nebraska which 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. Three years of successful navigation to Blencoe was possible due to the recent investments into the BSNP that we must protect. Their momentum continues to fuel conversations regarding opening other access points on the northern reaches of the river.

This funding comes at a critical time of momentum on the Missouri River, as we are also working through a navigation resiliency study that will lead to additional resiliency and improved economic opportunity for the region.

Failure to fund Missouri River BSNP O&M needs at full capability will jeopardize the long-term impact of the recent historic investments, and risks returning the BSNP back to the state of disrepair experienced over previous decades. This would be unfortunate during a time of historic momentum on the river along with ongoing studies to improve the resiliency and reliability of the river.

In addition, it is worth noting the resiliency of navigation on the Missouri River remains critical to flows and navigation on the middle Mississippi River, highlighting the national importance of this funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued support for those who live and work along the Missouri River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Muench". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Lynn Munch
Board Chair
Coalition to Protect the Missouri River