



Audubon

Upper Mississippi River Campaign



Upper
Mississippi River
Basin Association

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**Audubon, Midwest Area River Coalition (MARC) 2000, and
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA)
Announce Advocacy for Water Resources Legislation**

Stalled Senate WRDA Bill Would Authorize Crucial River Improvements

Audubon, Midwest Area River Coalition (MARC) 2000, and Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) announced their collective advocacy today for immediate Senate action on the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

This unprecedented collaboration among the three groups underscores the urgency of addressing long-ignored transportation and environmental concerns on the Upper Mississippi River System. The partnership also highlights the growing consensus for a workable plan for action after more than a decade of delay.

"Audubon, MARC 2000, and UMRBA hail this call to action as a major step forward in addressing the needs of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. WRDA 2005 must be taken up by the Senate immediately," stated Dan McGuiness, Director, Audubon Upper Mississippi River Campaign.

The House passed its WRDA version in mid-July. The Senate bill has been awaiting floor action since April. A letter from Audubon, MARC 2000, and UMRBA to members of the U.S. Senate will be released later this week, calling for an end to the delay.

"The Upper Mississippi River provisions represent a bi-partisan, comprehensive, balanced, and long-overdue approach to advancing our shared goal of achieving 'a working river and a river that works' for the Upper Mississippi River System," said leaders from the three groups in the letter. "This river network is Congressionally-recognized as both a significant national ecosystem and crucial transportation corridor, our third coast."

Audubon, MARC 2000, & UMRBA Urge WRDA/Add One

“The Governors of all five basin States have repeatedly expressed their support for moving forward with navigation and ecosystem improvements on the river. This WRDA bill is our chance to do just that,” said UMRBA Executive Director Holly Stoerker.

The bipartisan Senate leadership includes seven Senators from the Upper Mississippi River Basin: Kit Bond (R-MO), Jim Talent (R-MO), Barack Obama (D-IL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Charles Grassley (R-IA), and Norm Coleman (R-MN), as well as eleven others from around the country.

“We’re resolute in our mission. Our region’s hopes for future economic prosperity and river ecosystem revitalization have been compromised for too long,” stated Paul C. Rohde, President of MARC 2000. “Our deteriorating and outdated locks are hindering this river system’s role as a vital transportation corridor, as our ‘third coast’. To be good stewards of the Upper Mississippi River System, we must move forward as a region and promote workable, economically- and environmentally-sound river policy.”

ABOUT THE GROUPS:

MARC 2000 is a diverse coalition of agricultural, transportation, shipping, labor, manufacturing, economic development, and recreation interests, among others, advocating a reliable and efficient lock & dam infrastructure on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois River System. MARC 2000 advocates barge & towboat traffic as solutions for trade opportunities, economic growth and environmentally responsible transportation challenges.

AUDUBON works to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Their national network of community-based nature centers and chapters, scientific and educational programs, and advocacy on behalf of areas sustaining important bird populations, engage millions of people of all ages and backgrounds in positive conservation experiences.

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION is an interstate organization, created by the Governors of the five States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin, to help state agencies coordinate their programs on the river and work in collaboration with federal agencies. Through UMRBA, the States’ natural resource, transportation, agriculture, and economic development agencies all have a voice.

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