



December 15, 2021

The Honorable Thomas Carper, Chair
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Brandon Road Project – Full Federal Funding Request

Dear Senators Carper and Capito:

On behalf of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA), I am writing to express our member states' support for the eight Great Lakes states' request that the U.S. Congress authorize the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Project, Brandon Road, including both structural and non-structural components, at full federal expense for construction, remaining design, and perpetual operations, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2022. Such actions would be consistent with other large-scale projects that have a strong bearing on the regional and U.S. economy. Utilizing federal funds to cover the remaining 20 percent of non-federal project costs will create a higher level of funding certainty and stability for this important project.

Formed in 1981 by the Governors of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin, UMRBA represents its member states' common water resource interests and works collaboratively with both state and federal agencies that have management responsibilities on the Upper Mississippi River System.

The existing and potential impacts of aquatic nuisance species on the Upper Mississippi River System are substantial, affecting a broad range of river resources and uses, including native biota, water quality, commercial navigation, and recreational boating. The Upper Mississippi River Restoration program's long term resource monitoring has shown that the establishment of invasive carp has resulted in substantial declines of native fish species and altered the riverine ecosystem. The introduction and establishment of invasive carp to the Great Lakes system could have similar disrupting effects on its natural ecosystem.

UMRBA asserts that the most effective means of controlling the impacts of aquatic nuisance species is by prevention. The potential for movement of aquatic nuisance species from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River Basin also needs to be prevented. UMRBA views the proposed Brandon Road proposal to be a significant step towards developing a holistic two-way system.

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Importantly, UMRBA believes that the Brandon Road project will inform invasive fish movement deterrents, benefiting other states and regions. Research and control actions implemented and tested at the Brandon Road site will be relevant for efforts in other parts of the country, including the Mississippi River basin.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. Please contact me with any questions at kwallace@umrba.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K Walla" followed by a vertical line.

Kirsten Wallace
UMRBA Executive Director

cc: Rob Portman (Co-Chair) (R-OH) Great Lakes Task Force
Debbie Stabenow (Co-Chair) (D-MI) Great Lakes Task Force
Upper Mississippi River Delegation Members