



December 13, 2023

The Honorable Mary Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
1740 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1315

The Honorable Eric Sorensen
U.S. House of Representatives
1205 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1317

The Honorable Mike Bost
U.S. House of Representatives
352 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1312

The Honorable Darin LaHood
U.S. House of Representatives
1424 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1316

Dear Representatives Miller, Sorensen, Bost, and LaHood:

The Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) strongly supports efforts to improve the ability of people and organizations to prepare for, respond to, and recover from major floods events. This involves improving and better utilizing information to understand their respective risk of being impacted from flooding on the Upper Mississippi River System and to assess their vulnerabilities.

UMRBA applauds the leadership of Representative Mary Miller and other members of Congress in improving flood protection on the Upper Mississippi River System. As such, the states support the basic purpose and objectives of the Upper Mississippi River Levee and Floodwall Design Standards bill (H.R. 5722), including by more frequently renewing surface water profiles and flood frequency probabilities.

UMRBA acknowledges the increasing likelihood that high intensity floods will be experienced on the Upper Mississippi River System and that people, economies, and ecosystems will be impacted. Levee systems authorized fifty or more years ago likely do not offer the same levels of protection as we understood them to have then.

In the spirit of continued cooperation with Congress, our federal agency partners, affected interests, UMRBA is writing to respectfully offer the following comments regarding H.R. 5722:

- UMRBA acknowledges the importance of more frequently renewing surface water profiles and flood frequency probabilities to inform risk assessments and systemic and localized planning.
- UMRBA supports efforts to improve flood protection in certain places given current understandings of flood frequency probabilities and associated impacts.
- UMRBA's interpretation of the bill is that levees would be automatically allowed to adjust levee protection without mitigation for impacts onto others. However, UMRBA recognizes that any

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adjustments to levee heights and placement must abide by applicable state and federal law. That involves evaluating, acknowledging, and mitigating for any resulting impacts to other areas of the river floodplain.

- UMRBA respectfully requests that the bill include language acknowledging that modifications to levee heights and placement must abide by applicable state and federal law.

Relatedly, UMRBA is seeking a federal authorization in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 to develop long term, integrated approaches to improving flood conveyance and storage in the Upper Mississippi River System floodplain, systemically and locally. We intend for the process to facilitate a collaborative approach to evaluating of an extensive array of structural and nonstructural measures that would collectively improve flood conveyance and storage.

Please direct any questions about UMRBA's comments with respect to H.R. 5722, as introduced on September 27, 2023, to Kirsten Wallace at kwallace@umrba.org.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Wallace
Executive Director
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

cc: House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Eddie Belk, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Brig. Gen. Kimberly Pepples, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division