



May 6, 2026

The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chair
The Honorable Jared Huffman, Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1324-A Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6201

Dear Chair Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman:

The Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) is writing in opposition to the proposed Dakota Water Resources Act Amendments of 2026 (H.R. 8006). UMRBA has long held the position that the Missouri River water should be kept flowing within its basin and available to make its contribution to the Mississippi River. Such interbasin transfers as proposed in the bill would encourage unsustainable development and water use and result in far-reaching economic, societal, and ecological consequences to the nation.

As a general principle, UMRBA calls upon Congress and the federal government to recognize the interconnectedness of the Mississippi River Basin's major subwatersheds in executing their myriad of water resource management responsibilities in the nation's heartland. Any analysis of out-of-basin water diversions must thoroughly evaluate all dimensions of the complex water resource management issues.

In dry years, the Missouri River represents 65 percent of the flow in the reach of the Mississippi River between St. Louis, Missouri and Cairo, Illinois. Diversions of water from the Missouri River basin would result in diminishing flows to the Mississippi River Basin, resulting in consequential harm to commercial navigation, regional water supplies, water quality, and aquatic ecosystems.

While UMRBA can certainly appreciate the position of North Dakota to secure as much water supply as possible, it is with that same concern for sustainable water resource supplies, that UMRBA must compel Congress to widen the focus on this proposed authority and weigh the consequences of limiting the supply available within the Missouri River Basin and downstream connection to the Mississippi River.

UMRBA respectfully requests that Congress coordinate with both the Association and its member states before taking any further action on any proposed out-of-basin diversions of water from the Missouri River Basin.

UMRBA appreciates your consideration of the concern expressed in this letter. Please contact UMRBA Executive Director Kirsten Wallace (kwallace@umrba.org, 651-224-2880) with any questions concerning the Association's position as well as requests for consultation.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Wallace, Executive Director

Cc: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

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