

Corn Belt Ports Federally Recognized

October 9, 2020

Corn Belt Ports

Tri-State Region (IL, MO & IA)

MEDIA RELEASE #1



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Navigation and Civil Works Decision Support Center, in coordination with the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center (WCSC) issued the approval for the creation of the three Port Statistical Areas (PSAs) in the Heart of the Corn Belt: The Illinois Waterway (ILWW) Ports and Terminals PSA; The Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI) PSA; and the Mid-America PSA which is largely defined by the confluence of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Together the three ports include the core of the largest grain producing and exporting region in the United States. A PSA is roughly similar to a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). No new governance organizations were needed or created (just like with a MSA). This approval will make the Corn Belt more competitive for transportation infrastructure investment.

The proposals included the support of a bipartisan congressional delegation, the three state legislatures, state government officials, numerous riverfront cities and towns, over thirty riverfront counties, over a dozen regional planning agencies, and several existing state and city approved ports that encompassed over 600 combined miles of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

"This approval elevates the visibility of our region as a global origin for waterborne commerce," says Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager at the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission in Peoria, Illinois. "This is another example of the bi-state collaboration and commitment that enables us to excel together as a regional economic development powerhouse" said Paul Rumler, the President & CEO of the Quad Cities Chamber. BJ Murray, the Section Chief of Aviation and Marine Program Planning, Illinois Department of Transportation - Bureau of Planning commented that, the "Corn Belt Ports designation enables us to more accurately capture the scope of the region's maritime commerce."

The regional planning agencies and port authorities estimate that each of the three Corn Belt Port areas will individually rank among the top 100 U.S. ports (a category including coastal ports) by annual freight tonnage, as measured by the WCSC. The three ports have never previously been listed in WCSC statistical reporting, which annually ranks total freight tonnage. The Corn Belt Port tonnage reporting will officially begin with the WCSC database and publications that will be released in October 2020.

"Increasing the awareness of our significant waterborne commerce advantages through this designation is important for the economic development of the entire Tri-State Region," said Marcel Wagner, President of the Great River Economic Development Foundation in Quincy, IL. "The data gathered in the Corn Belt Port Statistical Areas will be extremely important to support informed decision-making and resourcing," said Craig Markley, Systems Planning Bureau Director at the Iowa Department of Transportation. Dr. Chris Merrett, Professor and Director of Western Illinois University's Institute for Rural Affairs, remarked, "This approval will raise the national and global profile of the exports and economic contributions by this unique and distinct part of the United States."

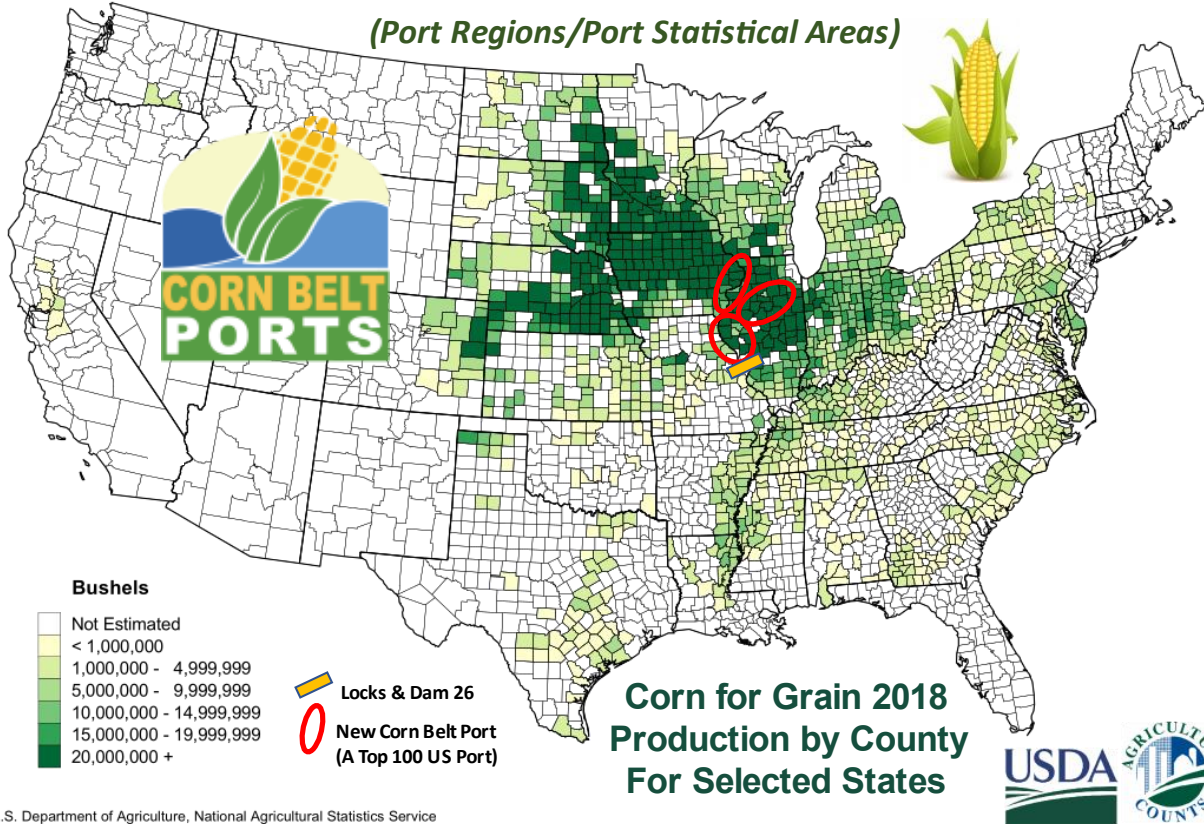
For more information on the Corn Belt Ports please contact your supporting Regional Planning Agency, your local economic development organization, or your servicing port.

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(Port Regions/Port Statistical Areas)



U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service