

Corn Belt Ports Catch \$1.24 Billion from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), More is Expected

February 02, 2022

Corn Belt Ports

Tri-State Region (IL, MO & IA)

MEDIA RELEASE #6



The Tri-State (IL, MO, IA) ports in the Heart of the Corn Belt above Locks and Dam 26 (i.e. the Corn Belt Ports) caught the first big investment since becoming federally recognized in 2020 and 2021. The recently released U.S. Army Corps of Engineers IIJA Work Plan included the following investments that will help ensure the Corn Belt Ports continue to have reliable access to global markets:

Mid-America Port Commission (\$849.13M)

- Retrofit Lock and Dam 25 with a modern 1200' Lock (NESP) (\$732,000,000)
- Construct a Fish Passage at Lock and Dam 22 (NESP) (\$97,100,000)
- Mississippi River Operations & Maintenance Backlog (\$17,594,200 est.) (Locks and Dam 24 & 25)
- Reservoir Operations & Maintenance Backlog (MO) (indirectly supports navigation)
 - Mark Twain Lake (\$1,890,000)
- Illinois Waterway Operations & Maintenance Backlog (\$550,000) (Downriver of LaGrange Lock and Dam)

Illinois Waterway Ports (\$309.178M)

- Brandon Road Lock and Dam Aquatic Nuisance Barrier (Joliet Regional Port) (\$225,838,000)
- Illinois Waterway Operations & Maintenance Backlog (\$83,340,000)

Upper Mississippi River Ports (Formerly Mississippi River Ports of E. Iowa and W. Illinois) (\$84.042M)

- Mississippi River Operations & Maintenance Backlog (\$49,999,000) (Locks and Dam 11-22)
- Reservoir Operations & Maintenance Backlog (IA) (indirectly supports navigation)
 - Lake Red Rock (\$14,450,000)
 - Saylorville Lake (\$17,000,000)
 - Coralville Lake (\$2,593,000)

With the IIJA funding to the Corn Belt Ports region, construction will be able to begin on the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). NESP was authorized by the U.S. Congress in 2007. More on NESP: [Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program \(NESP\) \(army.mil\)](https://www.army.mil/Navigation-and-Ecosystem-Sustainability-Program). NESP projects are two thirds of the IIJA funding received.

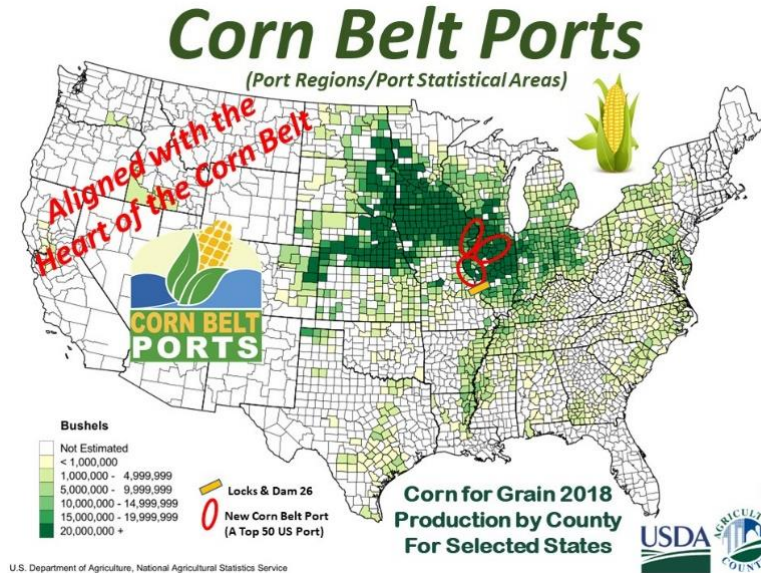
The IIJA Work Plans can be found at: [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 2022 \(oclc.org\)](https://www.oclc.org/Infrastructure-Investment-and-Jobs-Act-2022)

More funding for the Corn Belt Ports is expected through U.S. Department of Transportation and Maritime Administration (MARAD) grants and programs. Across the nation, the U.S. Department of Transportation is committed under IIJA to, “double investments in ports to help alleviate bottlenecks and increase sustainability,” and “strengthen supply chains by investing almost \$50 billion in our ports and airports on top of expanding existing programs that support freight investment across modes.”

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The Corn Belt Ports are the federally recognized Tri-State (IL, IA, MO) Ports in the Heart of the Corn Belt above Locks and Dam 26 (map below).



The Mid-America Port Commission (MAPC) is defined by the confluence of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, and is centered on the Quincy-Hannibal, IL-MO area.

The Illinois Waterway (ILWW) Ports are centered on the river cities of Peoria and Ottawa and includes ten counties within three regional planning agencies, and encompasses 175.5 River Miles. The ILWW Ports include the Havana, Heart of Illinois, Illinois Valley, Ottawa, and Seneca Regional Port Districts. And, they partner with the Joliet Regional Port to advance common ILWW goals.

The Upper Mississippi River Ports (UMRP) [formerly the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI)] is managed by a collaboration of five regional planning agencies, is centered on the Quad Cities, and includes riverfront counties north to the port city of Dubuque.

The Corn Belt Ports Objectives:

- All collectively are the equivalent of the Top Inland Port in the Nation based on tonnage
- All individually are a Top 50 Principal U.S. Port based on tonnage
- All individually are a Top 10 Inland Port
- All are on *Global Trade Magazine's* annual "Top 50 Power Port List"
- The Mid-America Port Commission is the largest port on the Upper Mississippi River
- The Mid-America Port Commission is the 2nd largest inland port (behind St. Louis) on the entire Mississippi River

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Featured Quotes:

Chris Smith, **Operations Director of the Corn Belt Ports (IL, MO, IA)** remarked, “The nation can no longer ignore the equivalent of the largest inland port in the nation. This initial IIJA investment through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was only possible because of the bipartisan and bicameral leadership of our U.S. Senators and Representatives, and it does highlight the national significance of our region to the global supply chain and economy. The new 1200’ Lock at Lock and Dam 25 (NESP) will be the first time a 1200’ Lock has been retrofitted to an existing dam since the 1200’ lock was added to the dam at Keokuk, Iowa between 1952 to 1957. The Corn Belt Ports team is now shifting focus landside to obtaining funding to improve our multi-modal port facilities through the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Maritime Administration (MARAD).”

Joe Green, General Manager of the **Seneca Regional Port District (IL)** said, “The \$83M in increased operations and maintenance funding will go a long way in extending the life of our aging locks and dams and improve the reliability of our marine infrastructure. The efficient transportation of the area’s corn and soybean crops to domestic and international markets assures the agricultural producers of a competitive price for their output. Conversely, efficient river transportation helps to minimize the transportation cost of their fertilizer input.”

Keith Conrad, President of the **Ottawa Port District (IL)** stated, “Now that we have secured funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for some badly needed improvements to our Illinois Waterway, we are looking forward to working with the U.S. Department of Transportation and MARAD to help us improve other aspects of the multi-modal transportation infrastructure that serves our community.”

Dan Silverthorn, Chair of the **Heart of Illinois Regional Port District (IL)** noted, “It is good to see this investment in our regional ports and waterways. We have been working for decades to see this modernization of our aging infrastructure materialize. The construction start of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) will not only address the needs of our transportation and natural infrastructure, but also create hundreds of needed high paying direct and indirect jobs over the years to come.”

Bob Martin, Chair of the **Havana Regional Port District (IL)** commented, “As someone who lives on the Illinois River, it is abundantly clear to me how important the Upper Mississippi River System is to both the national and global economies, while at the same time providing one of the nation’s most significant riverine aquatic ecosystem which has benefits beyond measure. This is an investment that will benefit future generations.”

Mike Norris, Chair of the **Mid-America Port Commission (IL, MO, IA)** said, “The Mid-America Port Commission (MAPC) appreciates the work of the Rock Island District and Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, our elected officials and all others who made \$849 million of new investment possible in the MAPC area. The investments will make Mississippi River commerce and the amazing river ecosystem even better. The 1200’ lock at LD 25 will be a compounding benefit enabling new savings and

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investment through efficiency and safety, while the other investments will complement the overall commerce and ecosystem connections.”

Carolyn Wisecarver, Executive Director of the **Pike Lincoln County Port Authority (MO)** stated, “The first 1200’ NESP Lock will be constructed in our port area. We are pleased that it will be fully funded to construction. In the long run this will be in the best interest of the taxpayer, and enable the Corps of Engineers to get it constructed rapidly so we can move on to the other 1200’ locks authorized for construction in the Tri-State area.”

Corey J. Mehaffy, Executive Director of the **Hannibal Regional Port Authority (MO)** remarked, “The investment in our port and waterway infrastructure will enable us to realize the regional growth in waterborne commerce that is projected on our stretch of the river. We see the construction of the 1200’ lock at Lock and Dam 25 as a precursor project for the addition of a 1200’ lock our area. Tackling multiple navigation projects simultaneously in the future will accelerate the benefits.”

Ralph Martin, Executive Director of the **Lewis County Regional Port Authority (MO)** commented, “With the official construction start of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP), the 1200’ Lock at our Lock and Dam 20 is closer to reality than ever before. Steamboat era locks are not safe, efficient, or reliable for a waterway as important to the nation as ours. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill is a good start to the modernization needed.”

Mike Norris, Executive Director of the **Southeast Iowa Regional Economic & Port Authority (IA)** said, “The Southeast Iowa Regional Economic and Port Authority (SIREPA) is extremely pleased to see new waterway investments via NESP benefitting not only Southeast Iowa but the entire Tri-State Area. The direct investments into our waterway infrastructure and ecosystem produce benefits that will far outpace the \$849 million spent as it increases efficiency and allows investment, recreation, and future opportunities far into the future and beyond.”

Captain Kevin Stier, Chair of the **Upper Mississippi River International Port District (IL)** remarked, “I work on the Upper Mississippi River, and experience first-hand how essential the ports and terminals are to the national and global supply chain. The \$50 Million in increased operations and maintenance funding will help keep our part of the inland waterway system reliable, and enable us to have dependable access to global markets. Most importantly, this \$1.2 Billion investment is a national commitment to us, and recognition of the value we provide to in our nation’s economy.”

Dr. Anshu Singh, **Director of Sustainability and Conservation for the Corn Belt Ports (IL, MO, IA)** stated, “We are thrilled that 25% of IIJA funding for the Corn Belt Ports region will be for innovative ecosystem restoration and protection projects. Sustainability is at the heart of both the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill and the Corn Belt Ports.”

For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers IIJA Work plan visit: [USACE Releases Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Spend Plan – Inland Rivers, Ports & Terminals, INC. \(irpt.net\)](https://www.usace.army.mil/News/2022/02/02/USACE-Releases-Infrastructure-Investment-and-Jobs-Act-Spend-Plan-Inland-Rivers-Ports-Terminals-INC-irpt-net/)