

## Environmentally Damaging and Economically Irresponsible Water Projects

The following projects should NOT be included in the economic stimulus package or omnibus legislation being considered by Congress and the new Administration:

- **Waiving the cost-share for construction and operation of the inland waterway system.** In recent years the general taxpayer has been paying approximately **91 percent** of the total costs of constructing, operating, and maintaining the nation's system of barge canals, with barge companies paying **less than 10 percent**. Now the barge companies want to waive completely the current requirement of a 50 percent cost-contribution from the Inland Waterway Trust Fund (which has run out of money due to several years of spending on expensive projects) for new construction and major rehabilitation, ***making the new work 100 percent paid for by the federal taxpayers***. Inland waterways currently receive over \$900 million in annual federal appropriations, making them by far the nation's most heavily subsidized transportation mode. Many barge fleets are owned by some of the largest corporations in the country. Users of all other forms of transportation – air, rail and highways pay much higher shares than barge shippers. It makes no sense to increase already enormous subsidies for inland waterway shippers to stimulate construction of more questionable inland waterway projects.
- **Upper Mississippi and Illinois River Lock Expansions** – At a cost of over \$2 billion, this Upper Mississippi River navigation lock expansion project was discredited in 2001 when the Corps was caught manipulating economic models to justify it. A recent, updated Corps of Engineers economic study found only **20 cents of benefits for each taxpayer dollar that would be spent** for this costly and damaging project based on existing traffic trends. Expanding the navigation system would impact numerous species of fish and mussels and degrade the Mississippi Flyway and portions of 275,000 acres of the National Wildlife Refuge system on the Mississippi River. Federal dollars should instead be directed at restoring the river's critically declining ecosystem.
- **Industrial Lock Replacement (New Orleans, LA)** – With a price tag of \$1.3 billion this project would be the nation's most expensive single new navigation lock. Long-term declining traffic on the river makes this project unnecessary and economically irresponsible. The residents of New Orleans would benefit much more if federal dollars were put toward restoring the collapsing wetlands of Coastal Louisiana, specifically for projects such as the Central Wetlands.
- **Arkansas River Channel Deepening (OK)** – Plans to convert the Arkansas River from a 9 foot to a 12 foot river channel so that Tulsa, Oklahoma can operate as an expanded seaport are a waste of taxpayer money, providing meager long-term benefits with a large upfront cost and damage to fish and wildlife habitat.

- **Northwest Area Water Supply Project and the Garrison Water Diversion Project (ND)** – Both the \$180 million Northwest Area Water Supply Project (NAWS) and the \$660 million Garrison Water Diversion Project (Red River Valley Water Supply) would export significant amounts of Missouri River water from the Missouri/Mississippi River basin into the Hudson Bay Basin. Both projects threaten to open a permanent water pathway for passage of invasive species, fish viruses, and other pathogens across continental watershed boundaries. Additionally, the projects would further reduce increasingly tight water supplies in the Missouri River Basin and threaten to adversely affect the biological health of affected water bodies.
- **Delaware River Main Channel Deepening** – The 106 mile deepening of the Delaware River was heavily criticized by the GAO in 2002, which found that the project would produce only 46 cents of benefits for every taxpayer dollar spent. The Corps is rushing to try to revive the project and has threatened to sidestep and ignore the state of Delaware’s permit requirement due to the State's failure to act, despite the extremely questionable economics. Delaware’s Hearing Officer has found more than 50 project flaws that would damage Delaware and has recommended that the State DNREC deny the permit for the project. The State of New Jersey is also calling for additional environmental reviews. Such a dubious and discredited project should not be a candidate for the economic stimulus.
- **St. Johns/New Madrid project (MO)** – This project would permanently disconnect the middle Mississippi River from one of its last remaining natural floodplains, while offering benefits to only a handful of wealthy farmers. The project would increase the flood risk for nearby Illinois and Kentucky communities by promoting expanded development of subsidized crop production in backwater lands that serve to mitigate Mississippi River flooding near the confluence with the Ohio River. Attempts to interfere with or overturn a recent court decision barring construction of this project with regard to either (or both) the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act should be strongly opposed.
- **Grand Prairie Irrigation Demonstration Project** – At \$420 million, this Corps of Engineers irrigation “demonstration” project in Arkansas would draw water from the White River, lowering water levels and damaging the White River and Cache River National Wildlife Refuges, providing irrigation to a small number of heavily subsidized rice farmers at a taxpayer cost of over \$480,000 per farm. Irrigation has never before been a primary purpose of Corps of Engineers’ projects.

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