

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Shalanda Young  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable Michael Connor  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
(Civil Works)  
Department of the Army  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon  
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Director Young, Assistant Secretary Connor, and LTG Spellmon:

We urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to prioritize and commit additional funding to the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS), including deepening, and operations and maintenance of the MKARNS in the allocation of additional funding provided by the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022*.

The MKARNS, which opened as an official inland waterway system in 1971, originates at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa and runs 445 miles through Oklahoma and Arkansas to the Mississippi River. Inland waterways barge transportation is the safest, most economical, and fuel-efficient way to move our nation's goods for use domestically and for export. On a single gallon of fuel, one barge can move freight more than four times farther than trucks. In a typical year, approximately 12 million tons of commerce traverses the MKARNS, valued at more than \$3.5 billion. However, if the MKARNS was deepened from 9-feet to 12-feet, the capacity of each barge could increase by nearly 400 tons and increase the value of business sales by over \$250 million.

Through enactment of the *Water Resources Development Act of 2020*, Congress provided the Corps with flexibility to continue carrying out construction of the deepening of the MKARNS. Continuing the deepening of the MKARNS would directly benefit the 56,000 jobs for surrounding farmers, manufacturers, and other producers who contribute over \$8 billion in sales and nearly \$300 million in state and local tax revenue as a result of the system's efficient operation. We thank you for allocating \$92.6 million to begin construction of MKARNS deepening, and urge you to commit additional funding this year to ensure the timely completion of this important project.

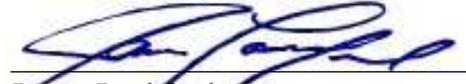
The future economic viability of the MKARNS is at risk as there is currently more than a \$300 million backlog in critical maintenance along the entire 50-year-old system. This includes locks, dams, and other important equipment that is deteriorating to dangerous conditions. The MKARNS is vital to the economies of Oklahoma and Arkansas, as well as Kansas, which sends or receives 49 percent of the tonnage coming through Oklahoma ports. A critical failure on the system could result in it being shut down for months and even a temporary shutdown could put future use of the system at risk, as businesses would no longer see the MKARNS as reliable and would likely find other means to transport their goods. Losing navigation on the entire MKARNS would cost over 6,000 jobs and cause national GDP to decline by \$723 million.

As the Corps develops the Fiscal Year 2022 Work Plan, we respectfully request your support in providing additional funding for deepening, and operations and maintenance of the MKARNS. We look forward to working with you on improving our nation's vital inland waterways infrastructure.

Sincerely,



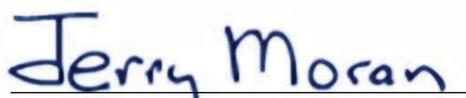
James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



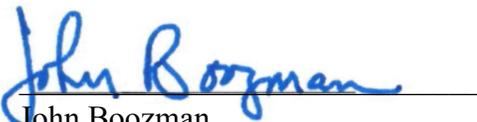
James Lankford  
United States Senator



Roger Marshall  
United States Senator



Jerry Moran  
United States Senator



John Boozman  
United States Senator



Tom Cotton  
United States Senator



Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress



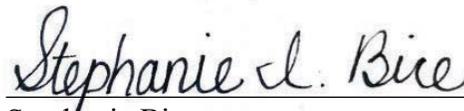
Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



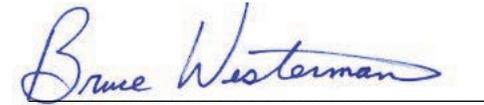
Tom Cole  
Member of Congress



Frank Lucas  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Bice  
Member of Congress



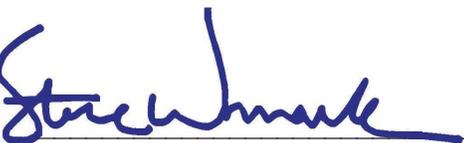
Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



French Hill  
Member of Congress



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress



Steve Womack  
Member of Congress