



e-Brief

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A periodic publication informing members and supporters of the legislative and media initiatives of Waterways Council, Inc. If you have any questions, please contact our offices at (703) 373-2261 or dcolbert@vesselalliance.com.

EXTRA TO E-BRIEF ... June 21, 2004 • Issue #19

The Washington Post

Wednesday, June 16, 2004; Page A26 , LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Lock on Economic Sense on the Mississippi?

It was entertaining to read Sebastian Mallaby's June 7 op-ed column, "Kit's Caboodle," regarding my "beloved waterway," the Mississippi River.

The locks on the Mississippi River move 80 million tons of cargo, including 60 percent of our nation's corn exports (forecast to increase by 44 percent in the next decade), at two-thirds the cost of rail transport. Our inland system cleanly and efficiently hauls 18 percent of U.S. freight at 2 percent of the cost, and, unlike other transportation options, it has plenty of room to grow if investments are made. A single medium barge-tow carries the same amount of grain as 870 trucks. Mr. Mallaby suggests that a 50-year study can be done reliably, demonstrating that he may be speaking with authority when he uses such words as "not always sane" and "farcical." The National Academy of Sciences has concluded, "No one can know or predict with confidence the demand for water transportation -- or almost anything else -- 50 or more years in the future." To continue annually carrying billions of dollars of goods on the Mississippi, the cost to the taxpayers of modernizing locks is \$730 million, not \$1.7 billion as erroneously reported. If we make the proper investments out in the world where people produce, sell and ship goods, the economic activity they generate will continue to finance Washington's self-centered appetites.

- CHRISTOPHER S. BOND
U.S. Senator (R-Mo.) Washington

Regarding a recent op-ed and news story ["Navigation Project Might Go to Senate," June 7]: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has devoted much time and attention to the upper Mississippi River navigation study. The draft report incorporates more than a decade of study and analysis by many leading engineers, economists, fisheries experts and other scientists. The study is extraordinarily complex given the uncertainties we face, but the important point is to face and prepare for uncertainties. We have only a draft proposal at this point, and there are still many views to consider. The Corps is asking for public comment about our draft proposal at a series of meetings. There will be a meeting at 3 p.m. tomorrow at the Phoenix Park Hotel in Washington. I encourage The Post's readers to attend, learn more and contribute their thoughts.

- BOB FLOWERS
Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Washington

Sebastian Mallaby attacked Sen. Christopher S. "Kit" Bond for championing a project to modernize and upgrade an important portion of a lock-and-dam system built in the 1930s.

But Mr. Mallaby's thinking is as outdated as that 70-year-old infrastructure. The lock-expansion project will preserve and create jobs, increase exports, protect Midwestern towns and the economies they support, and help keep our environment from being overrun with traffic congestion and deteriorating air quality.

Mr. Mallaby is right about one thing -- this is "legislation that only special interests could appreciate." He fails to understand, however, that those special interests include every American who turns on a light, has something to eat or drives a car.

- R. BARRY PALMER,
President and Chief Executive, Waterways Council Inc.