



AMERICAN LAND  
CONSERVANCY

## **ALC Endorses Balanced Ecosystem and Infrastructure Investments for America's Rivers**

Joins Waterways Council Inc. in Washington D.C. to Brief Members of  
Congress on Proposed Inland Waterways Investment Legislation

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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WASHINGTON, DC: American Land Conservancy (ALC) reaffirmed its strong support of a balanced approach to ecosystem and economic needs on America's rivers this week in a series of informational meetings on Wednesday with U.S. Senators and Representatives and their staff on Capitol Hill.

ALC representatives joined with a diverse group of stakeholders to talk to members of Congress about federal ecosystem restoration and navigation infrastructure funding on the Mississippi River. The visits were organized by Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) as Congress begins drafting the FY 2011 budget, which may include funding for Mississippi River projects authorized under the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (WRDA).

“American Land Conservancy is proud to work with WCI members to seek balanced environmental and economic progress on America's great rivers,” said Kerry O'Toole, president of ALC. “For conservation to be long-lasting and effective on the Mississippi, environmental and economic interests need to work together so that both wildlife and human needs are addressed.”

During the meetings with senators and representatives, ALC staff members provided information about benefits to fish and wildlife, lower carbon emissions from river transportation compared to trucking and rail, and expanded outdoor recreation areas if the dual-purpose Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) provisions are funded in a new WRDA bill. WCI circulated a ‘Dear Colleague’ letter from Missouri Congressman Russ Carnahan and Illinois Congressman Aaron Schock that seeks

– more –

\$25 million for the Environmental Management Program and \$15 million to fund NESP, a long-term program of navigation improvements and ecological restoration authorized by WRDA.

The day's activities concluded with WCI's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Service Award Banquet, where Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley was honored for his support for NESP. In his award acceptance remarks Senator Grassley praised the broad array of supporters NESP has received, including conservation groups such as American Land Conservancy, and the region's agricultural producers, organized labor, and shippers. Senator Grassley further pointed out that "our nation's inland waterways system also provides a cost effective, fuel efficient, and environmentally friendly way to move our bulk products."

"The climate benefit offered by river transportation through reduced carbon emissions compared to truck and rail shipping was an eye-opener to Members of Congress and their staffs," said O'Toole. "WRDA provides an opportunity to increase river transportation efficiency even more, while also providing critical funding for environmental projects."

O'Toole noted that ALC has been a longtime supporter of WRDA and now encourages full funding. "With the many threats facing our environment today, we need the kind of win-win outcomes WRDA can provide."

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**American Land Conservancy** is a non-profit land conservation organization dedicated to protecting America's natural heritage by conserving land for the benefit of people and wildlife. Since 1990 ALC has conserved more than 250,000 acres of land and water resources, working farms and ranches, and wildlife habitat, nationwide. ALC has worked along the Mississippi River since the Great Flood of 1993, protecting 25,000 acres of critical habitat while helping to maintain the commercial viability of the river and supporting nature-based economic development in riverside communities. For more information on ALC see [www.alcnet.org](http://www.alcnet.org).