



## ENSURING WATERWAYS RELIABILITY

*In order to keep critical infrastructure operating and performing efficiently, work must be done to adequately fund the nation's inland waterways system and address its increasing operations and maintenance needs.*

### PRESERVING OUR WORLD-CLASS SYSTEM

Funding (in constant dollars) for operations and maintenance (O&M) on America's inland navigation system has remained flat for more than two decades. During this period, operations costs have continued to increase, yielding fewer funds that can be devoted to proper system maintenance. As a result, an increasing amount of routine maintenance on waterways infrastructure has been deferred.

As funding continues to stagnate, deferred maintenance becomes unfunded maintenance. Over time, this growing maintenance backlog on the nation's aging waterways infrastructure has eroded the effective capability of our world-class inland navigation system.

Earlier this decade, the continued shortfall in O&M funding led to a self-defeating cycle where an increasing percentage of available maintenance dollars went into emergency repairs—a "fix-as-fail"



*Maintenance and repair of lock gates is critical to ensuring waterways reliability.*



*Timely and adequate dredging ensures the orderly flow of commerce.*



**WATERWAYS**  
COUNCIL, INC.

*Waterways Council, Inc. is the national public policy organization advocating a modern and well-maintained national system of ports and inland waterways.*

approach to systems maintenance. This reactive approach to maintenance did not account for the impact of a failure on waterways users, for whom alternate routes were often unavailable or inadequate in the event of a service interruption.

### **MOVING AWAY FROM “FIX-AS-FAIL”**

In 2003 and 2004, several high-profile lock closures raised reliability concerns among shippers, carriers, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and ultimately consumers who pay increased costs for expensive transportation delays. To counter the trend of emergency closures, Waterways Council, Inc. and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers initiated Risk and Reliability workshops to develop consensus maintenance priorities on the Ohio River System, the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway and on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Industry and government met together to assess critical needs on all segments of the nation’s waterways system and determined maintenance priorities based upon the likelihood of a service interruption at a particular location as well as its potential impact to commerce.

### **MAINTENANCE BACKLOG REQUIRES INCREASED INVESTMENT**

At the same time, the Inland Waterways Users Board and Waterways Council called for an increase of \$100 million annually for critical O&M, and

Congress responded with increased maintenance funding. However, the years of unfunded maintenance continue to adversely impact the reliability of this vital transportation system. The efforts of industry and government to prioritize maintenance projects are a positive development, but maintenance funding continues to fall short of long-term maintenance requirements.

We must stand firm on our commitment to maintain our inland navigation system, lest the benefits of reliable, low-cost transportation be “washed down the river.”

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