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**STUDY RELEASED ON HOW TO IMPROVE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS'  
INLAND NAVIGATION PROJECTS DELIVERY**

Today, WCI released a study by HDR, Inc. (Recommendations for Improving the Delivery of Inland Waterway Capital Projects...[NEED TO HYPERLINK](#)) that examines why costs for U.S. inland waterways capital projects (locks and dams) escalate, timelines for completion continue to slip, and economic benefits to the Nation from projects' execution are consistently delayed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works mission is responsible for constructing the Nation's inland waterways infrastructure. The HDR study employed a multi-faceted approach, including interviews with customers of the Corps and other relevant entities to obtain perspectives on improving the delivery of lock and dam projects. In addition, HDR conducted comprehensive background research and broader analyses of the systemic challenges associated with delivering large-scale infrastructure projects within established timeframes and budgets.

America's lock and dam infrastructure has been slow to modernize over the past 40 years. Since 1987, only 10 projects to modernize or expand locks on the inland system have been completed. Seven of those projects were started and finished between 1987 and 1997 with an average cost overrun of 33%.

For many years, inadequate or uncertain annual funding was cited as the primary cause of cost overruns and schedule delays, but what has become clear since the infusion of \$2.9 billion from the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure bill is that project execution challenges extend beyond funding.

Key recommendations of the HDR study include:

- Treat the inland navigation waterways as a system, versus a series of individual projects. Manage the system holistically to ensure consistency with the Capital Investment

Strategy (CIS)\*, effectively apply lessons learned across projects, and be aware of how challenges at one project can, and very often do, impact other projects within a portfolio. (\*CIS is a 20-year plan developed by the Corps, in coordination with the Inland Waterways Users Board (IWUB), to prioritize funding for lock, dam, and waterways infrastructure upgrades, focusing on reliability and efficiency).

- Systemically apply programmatic funding
- Create a centralized program management office at Corps Headquarters for inland waterways construction
- Improve cost estimating and value engineering
- Use standard designs for locks and dams where possible
- Expand site investigation efforts
- Utilize 3D modeling and conduct constructability reviews
- Centralize competencies and deepen the Corps' knowledge base

The study's findings reveal that most of the recommendations that can reasonably be implemented by the Corps require support and approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). It also spotlights the consequences of OMB's interpretation of Executive Order (EO) 12322 and how it limits access to effective solutions such as continuing contracts and alternative delivery methods that provide considerable opportunity to improve execution and reduce risk. The key recommendations to follow the CIS and take a systemic approach with programmatic funding also require OMB participation.

"WCI is pleased with the depth and clarity provided in HDR's study recommendations," said WCI President/CEO Tracy Zea. "The analysis underscores the complex challenges facing lock and dam project delivery and highlights the importance of collaboration and alignment among the Corps, industry, Congress, and the Administration. WCI will continue to support and implement workable solutions that improve project execution and reliability of our Nation's critically important inland waterways system," he continued.

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