

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

Statement by the President

I am pleased to announce today that the Secretary of the Army has recommended to the Congress authorization of a replacement for Locks and Dam 26 located on the Mississippi River, just north of St. Louis, Missouri.

Locks and Dam 26 is a vital link in our inland waterway system. For example, last year over 26 million tons of grain -- equal to 25% of our entire production bound for export -- moved through this facility.

The existing structure -- nearly 40 years old -- has deteriorated so significantly that it will be neither safe nor reliable for continued navigation over the decades ahead. Resulting delays in traffic will be increasingly costly and disruptive.

Accordingly, since 1969 the Secretary of the Army has sought replacement. However, progress on replacement has been halted by a court ruling which requires enactment of authorizing legislation and preparation of a new environmental impact statement.

The Secretary of the Army has now completed and filed a final environmental impact statement and is requesting the Congress to act on the required authorizing legislation. I urge the Congress to act quickly in providing this needed authority. Upon enactment, I shall direct the Secretary of the Army to proceed with construction as expeditiously as possible. We cannot afford further delay.

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