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Office of the White House Press Secretary  
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THE WHITE HOUSE

FACT SHEET

The President today announced that the Secretary of the Army has forwarded legislation to the Congress recommending authorization of the design and construction of a new dam and 1200-foot lock to replace Locks and Dam 26.

Background

Completed in 1938 just north of St. Louis, Missouri, Locks and Dam 26 facilitate the movement of barge traffic on the Mississippi River between the lower Mississippi-Ohio waterways and the upper Mississippi-Illinois waterways. The Army Corps of Engineers facility currently consists of a dam across the river and two locks--600 feet and 360 feet long--located adjacent to the Illinois shore. It is expected that 60 million tons of bulk commodities--principally grain, petroleum, chemicals and coal--will move through the locks this year.

In recent years, the condition of Locks and Dam 26 has deteriorated significantly because turbulence and underseepage have disturbed and eroded the sand surrounding the piles on which the structure rests. As a result, the dam and locks are now of a condition which the Army Corps of Engineers considers inadequate for safe, extended, reliable project life.

In 1969, the Secretary of the Army approved replacement of the structure with a new dam and two 1200-foot locks. This proposed project would more than double existing capacity. Upon suit by environmental groups and railroads, a Federal District Court has halted progress on the project on the grounds that specific authorizing legislation is necessary and that a new environmental impact statement should be prepared.

Recommendation of the Secretary of the Army

The Secretary of the Army has recommended enactment of authorizing legislation which provides for:

- construction of a new dam and 1200-foot lock at a site two miles downstream from the existing structure;
- a comprehensive study to be conducted by the Army and the Department of Transportation of bulk commodity transportation in the upper midwest over the next 50 years;
- acquisition and development of wildlife habitat and park lands to mitigate environmental effects of the proposed construction.

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The proposed replacement of Locks and Dam 26 would:

- cost an estimated \$391 million;
- be completed in eight to ten years;
- provide for an increase of 13 million tons annually over the 73 million ton capacity of the existing structure;
- not result in any interruption in barge traffic during construction;
- provide for additional expansion of capacity, but only upon a subsequent congressional authorization.

A draft environmental impact statement was completed on March 19, 1976, and circulated to all interested Federal, State and local agencies. The comments received from these agencies have been reviewed, and a final environmental impact statement has been prepared and filed with the Council on Environmental Quality.

The recommendations of the Army's Chief of Engineers were provided in a report dated July 31, 1976. The recommendations of the Secretary of the Army were provided to the Office of Management and Budget by letter dated August 19, 1976. The report and recommendations have been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget in accordance with Executive Order No. 9384, dated October 4, 1943.

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