

Introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin

The Mississippi River Resilience and Restoration Initiative (MRRRI) Act

Legislation would create a non-regulatory and collaborative approach to protect and restore the health of America's iconic waterway, the Mississippi River.

For 20 million Americans, the Mississippi River is their primary source of drinking water. It is also a working river and job creator, encapsulating a \$500-billion-a-year commercial, recreation, and natural resources-based river economy that employs 1.5 million people. In order to protect this resource, the MRRRI Act creates a non-regulatory, collaborative approach to provide the framework, funding, and focus to restore and protect the Mississippi River, while building resilience for the communities that depend upon this iconic American waterway.

Based on the success of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative Act directs the Environmental Protection Agency, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, and Army Corps of Engineers, to consult and collaborate with states, tribal nations, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to establish and coordinate the initiative. A regularly updated action plan, developed with public input, will guide the implementation of MRRRI and the use of federal funds in order to:

- Improve water quality to protect drinking water, wildlife, and river-dependent industries by reducing runoff pollution;
- Reduce flood and storm risks and increase community resilience through natural infrastructure solutions and ecologically sound management;
- Protect and restore wildlife habitat, including by preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species;
- Deliver dedicated funding and resources to communities that have born the highest costs of environmental degradation.

In addition to providing grants to execute the MRRRI action plan, the legislation will advance the scientific understanding of the challenges facing the river, and how to meet them, by establishing a network of research centers along the river corridor.

Endorsing Organizations: American Bird Conservancy, American Federation of Government Employees – Local 704, Association of Minnesota Counties, Broken Paddle Guiding Company, Clean Wisconsin, CURE (Clean Up the River Environment), DownRiver Alliance, Endangered Habitats League, Environmental Working Group, Freshwater Future, Friends of the Mississippi River, Friends of Pool 2, Green Lands Blue Waters, A House Unbuilt, Illinois Environmental Council, Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Minnesota Farmers Union, Minnesota Forestry Association, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Mississippi River Network, Missouri River Bird Observatory, National Audubon Society, National League of Cities, National Parks Conservation Association, National Wildlife Federation, Owámnnyomni Okhódayapi (formerly Friends of the Falls), Sierra Club, State of Minnesota/Office of Governor Walz, Taproot Earth, the Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans, Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix & Namekagon, Wilderness Inquiry, Wildlife Forever, Wisconsin Farmers Union.

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