

U.S. Rep. Kind: Votes for bipartisan legislation to improve water infrastructure, create jobs, and protect the Mississippi River

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Washington, DC —Today, **Rep. Ron Kind** voted for the bipartisan *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)*, which would authorize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to carry out vital water infrastructure projects and studies. The bill would boost our economy amid the COVID-19 pandemic by creating jobs while investing in necessary projects like flood damage reduction, shoreline protection, inland waterways improvement, and ecosystem restoration. The legislation passed with bipartisan support.

“The Mississippi River shapes Wisconsin’s local economy and environment. We need to take proactive steps to support the river and the communities that rely on it,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “To that end, I fought for Upper Mississippi River conservation and restoration funding to be included in WRDA and I’m proud that this legislation is now one of the largest investments in the Upper Mississippi in history. WRDA will update our ecosystem and infrastructure needs, create jobs, and reduce the risk of repeated flooding, all while protecting our waters for generations to come.”

Specifically, WRDA would authorize 35 Corps feasibility studies and construction of all 34 pending proposed projects to expand water resource infrastructure, as well as strengthen our ports, harbors, and inland waters, and build more resilient communities by maximizing sustainable development. The legislation would also improve resources for the Mississippi River by including provisions to:

- Increase funding for Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program
- Authorize a plan to assess the water resource needs of the Upper Mississippi
- Invest in the construction of inland waterways projects and the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) for the Upper Mississippi River
- Authorize the Great Lakes Mississippi River inter-basin study on ecosystem restoration
- Increase funding to \$15 million for the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program, based out of the Upper Midwest Environment Sciences Center in La Crosse, WI

Rep. Kind is the founder and co-chair of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Task Force, and a co-chair of the Congressional Mississippi River Caucus and the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus. He has been a longtime champion of protecting the Mississippi River for the people of Wisconsin's Third Congressional District.