

PORTS & TERMINALS

Bipartisan Congressional Letter Urges Mid-America Port Designation

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Four members of Illinois' congressional delegation sent a letter September 9 to Col. Steven Sattinger, commander of the Rock Island Engineer District, urging that several stretches of terminals along a stretch of the Mississippi River in the Quad Cities region be designated a statistical port. The area would include the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI), the Mid-America Port and the Illinois Waterways Ports and Terminals, which together its supporters are calling the Corn Belt Port or Corn Belt Statistical Area.

The letter was signed by Reps. Abby Finkenauer (D-Iowa), Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.), Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa) and Darin LaHood (R-Ill.). Finkenauer serves on the powerful House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and is co-chair of the Highways and Transit subcommittee.

“We hope that approval can be granted in a timely fashion as these efforts can have a significantly positive impact on our local economies,” the signers urged. “Waterborne commerce has always enabled the Tri-State Region to be nationally and globally competitive. Access to inland waterways is an efficient and cost-effective option for freight, giving our communities an edge in the shipment of commodities. Recognition of this group of ports as a multimodal port region stands to benefit economies of the Tri-State area through better regional marketing and more economic development opportunities. It will help raise the region’s profile to improve national and global visibility and competitiveness, helping attract a wide range of public and private investment. In 2017, each of these port areas moved over 6 million tons of food and food products, making them some of the most active ports on the Mississippi River. We are supportive of this long overdue and common-sense action by our local communities and interested parties in the region.”

In Iowa, Dubuque and Jackson counties have both approved resolutions supporting the port statistical area designation.

“Recognition of existing ports in the heart of the Corn Belt makes the multi-state region more globally visible and competitive,” said former Rock Island District Commander Robert A. Sinkler, who has been a driving force in mobilizing support for the designation. “The bipartisan leadership behind this initiative gives a big boost to realizing the value of the region’s multi-modal transportation infrastructure to the nation and the global marketplace.”

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