

2001 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 56

1 **Relating to:** urging authorization of funding for modernization of lock and dam
2 infrastructure on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers' Inland Waterways
3 Transportation System.

4 Whereas, the state of Wisconsin borders or contains over 360 miles of the upper
5 Mississippi River and 11 navigation locks and dams along those borders; and

6 Whereas, many of Wisconsin's locks and dams are more than 60 years old and
7 only 600 feet long, making them unable to accommodate modern barge tows of 1,200
8 feet long, nearly tripling locking times and causing lengthy delays and ultimately
9 increasing shipping costs; and

10 Whereas, the use of 1,200-foot locks has been proven nationwide as the best
11 method of improving efficiency, reducing congestion, and modernizing the inland
12 waterways; and

13 Whereas, the construction of the lock and dam system has spurred economic
14 growth and a higher standard of living in the Mississippi and Illinois river basin, and

1 today supplies more than 300,000,000 tons of the nation's cargo, supporting more
2 than 400,000 jobs, including 90,000 in manufacturing; and

3 Whereas, more than 60% of American agricultural exports, including corn,
4 wheat, and soybeans, are shipped down the Mississippi and Illinois rivers on the way
5 to foreign markets; and

6 Whereas, Wisconsin farmers, producers, and consumers rely on efficient
7 transportation to remain competitive in a global economy, and efficiencies in river
8 transport offset higher production costs compared to those incurred by foreign
9 competitors; and

10 Whereas, the upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers lock and dam system saves
11 our nation more than \$1.5 billion in higher transportation costs each year, and failing
12 to construct 1,200-foot locks will cause farmers to use more expensive alternative
13 modes of transportation, including trucks and trains; and

14 Whereas, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, congestion along the
15 upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers is costing Wisconsin and other producers and
16 consumers in the basin \$98,000,000 per year in higher transportation costs; and

17 Whereas, river transportation is the most environmentally friendly form of
18 transporting goods and commodities, creating almost no noise pollution and emitting
19 35% to 60% fewer pollutants than either trucks or trains, according to the U.S.
20 Environmental Protection Agency; and

21 Whereas, moving away from river transport would add millions of trucks and
22 railcars to our nation's infrastructure, adding air pollution, traffic congestion, and
23 greater wear and tear on highways; and

24 Whereas, backwater lakes created by the lock and dam system provide
25 breeding grounds for migratory waterfowl and fish; and

1 Whereas, the lakes and 500 miles of wildlife refuge also support a
2 one-billion-dollar per year recreational industry, including hunting, fishing, and
3 tourism jobs; and

4 Whereas, upgrading the system of locks and dams on the upper Mississippi and
5 Illinois rivers will provide 3,000 construction and related jobs over a 15-year to
6 20-year period; and

7 Whereas, in 1999 the state of Wisconsin shipped 1,100,000 tons of commodities,
8 including grain, coal, chemicals, aggregates, and other products; and

9 Whereas, 3,900,000 tons of commodities, including grain, coal, chemicals,
10 aggregates, and other products, were shipped to, from, and within Wisconsin by
11 barge, representing \$313,000,000 in value; and

12 Whereas, shippers moving by barge in Wisconsin realized a savings of
13 approximately \$40,000,000 compared to other transportation modes; and

14 Whereas, Wisconsin docks shipped products by barge to 6 states and received
15 products from 11 states; and

16 Whereas, there are approximately 20 manufacturing facilities, terminals, and
17 docks on the waterways of Wisconsin, representing thousands of jobs in the state;
18 and

19 Whereas, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting a collaborative
20 navigation study of the economic and environmental factors to be considered when
21 examining capital improvements to the upper Mississippi River system; and

22 Whereas, the navigation study will release initial results in a summer 2002
23 report; now, therefore, be it

