

# RESTORE

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER DELTA



MississippiRiverDelta.org

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December 7, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell,

The Restore the Mississippi River Delta (MRD) is a coalition of national and regional nonprofit organizations working to ensure an equitable, safer, and flourishing coast for Louisiana's communities, ecosystem, and economy. On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we write to express our enthusiastic support for two particular provisions included in WRDA 2022: language clarifying that the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) Comprehensive Management Study (Sec. 8343) and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) Ecosystem Restoration Plan (Sec. 8341) both be funded and at full federal expense.

The LMR Comprehensive Management Study (Sec. 8343) is a large-scale study that will identify opportunities to enhance and transform river management through the seven states that make up the Lower Mississippi River basin. Completion of the LMR Comprehensive Management Study will help coordinate river management and develop synergies among ecosystem restoration, storm protection, community resilience, and river-dependent commerce. By clarifying that the LMR Comprehensive Management study will be completed with a 100% federal cost-share, the legislation will ensure that the study gets underway without delays that otherwise could have frustrated the study's completion and risked future loss of lives, economic outputs, and ecological integrity.

The MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan is a comprehensive plan aimed at the restoration and conservation of the vast estuarine habitat areas affected by the MRGO navigation channel, a Corps-constructed project that was shut down in 2009 following its destructive unintended impacts during Hurricane Katrina. The restoration is critical for protecting New Orleans, particularly the Lower Ninth Ward, New Orleans East, and St. Bernard Parish, from hurricane impacts such as flooding and storm surge, and for restoring critical wetland habitat in Southeast



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Louisiana. The clarifying language in Sec. 8341 funding the plan at full federal expense, as congressionally intended when the project was authorized, will ensure that restoration is completed in the most timely and efficient manner, in the best interest of the impacted communities and ecosystems.

Thank you again for your bipartisan efforts, and for those of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, to include these vital provisions. These critical clarifications will help protect millions of Americans and support coastal habitat for a wide array of wildlife. We look forward to continuing to work with you for a flood- and storm-resilient future for the Mississippi River Delta, the Gulf Coast, and the Lower Mississippi River.

Sincerely,

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana  
Environmental Defense Fund  
National Audubon Society  
National Wildlife Federation  
Pontchartrain Conservancy

CC:

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper, Chairman, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee  
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

The Honorable Ben Cardin, Chair, Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee  
The Honorable Kevin Cramer, Ranking Member, Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee

The Honorable Peter A. Defazio, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano, Chair, Subcommittee on Water Resources & Environment

