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Statement of the Governors of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin on Water Quality Protection for the Mississippi River

August 2, 2007

Summary

The Governors support a coordinated approach for protecting the Upper Mississippi River's water quality and request that the Federal government join as a partner in this effort.

The Mississippi River: A Great, Shared Resource

The Mississippi River, America's great river, is central to the environment, economy, and quality of life of the citizens of the Upper Midwest. As Governors of the States of the Upper Mississippi River, we share a commitment to protect and restore this vital national resource. The River is a rich and diverse ecosystem, a source of water supply, a recreational resource, and a commercial navigation system. An important part of sustaining the Mississippi River and its multiple uses is the protection of its water quality.

The States' Responsibilities and Plan for Coordination

We are committed not only to the protection of the River's water quality, but we are also committed to doing so in a coordinated manner. Region-wide cooperation reflects the reality that the River, its basin, and the inputs affecting its water quality span a wide portion of the nation's heartland. Working together not only best matches the scale of the River, but allows us to combine and target the resources we have available.

We are therefore supporting the coordination of water quality monitoring, assessment, and standards for the Upper Mississippi River by the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin and the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA). This approach will allow the Clean Water Act to be implemented on the Upper Mississippi River in a more coordinated and consistent fashion than has ever been possible previously. We expect that this strategy will result in better protection of the River, enhanced public understanding and awareness, more consistent expectations for the regulated community, and improved efficiency in the allocation of resources.

Need for Federal Cooperation and Support

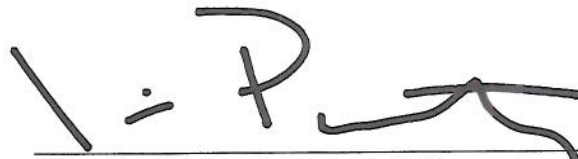
Along with the States, the Federal government shares in the responsibility for the protection of the River as a regional and national asset. We expect and welcome the Federal government to join us in our cooperative effort by providing resources that are commensurate with what has been invested in other nationally significant water bodies such as the Ohio River, the Great Lakes, and the Chesapeake Bay. In particular, we urge:

- The Congress to provide the resources necessary for the coordinated Upper Mississippi River water quality program to be successful, and
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support the effort through the involvement of its Regions and by establishing dedicated funding within its budget.


The resources provided by the Federal government will be combined with the resources already being dedicated by the States to this effort. Federal participation and support will be critical to our success.

We look forward to a successful partnership among the States and with the Federal government. This is the right approach for protection of the Mississippi River's water quality. The public both expects and deserves such a coordinated and comprehensive strategy.


Rod Blagojevich, Governor of Illinois


Tim Pawlenty, Governor of Minnesota


Chet Culver, Governor of Iowa


Matt Blunt, Governor of Missouri


Jim Doyle, Governor of Wisconsin