

Midwest Flood Control Association

Formal Statement

By Tim Maiers, Executive Director

On behalf of

Roger Sutter, Chairman

to the

Mississippi River Commission

High-Water Inspection

March 23, 2026



MIDWEST FLOOD CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Statement for the Record

to the

MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

March 23, 2026

General Peeples and Members of the Mississippi River Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and testify before this storied Commission. My name is Tim Maiers, and I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Midwest Flood Control Association. I am presenting on behalf of Chairman Roger Sutter and the Executive Committee, who are currently in Washington, D.C. conducting Congressional visits with our delegation.

As you recall, several of our board members testified before you in St. Louis last August. We are grateful that you heard our testimony and made strong recommendations as set forth in the Proceedings of the Mississippi River Commission for last year. We also appreciate the wise counsel provided by the Mississippi River Commission in your formal response letters back to us. We can report that we have had great success in meeting with the Rock Island District in December, which served as a reset in our dealings with each other. We look forward to continuing the dialogue and further strengthening that relationship. Likewise, we look forward to further engagements with the St. Louis District. We commend Colonel Pannier and his team for their accessibility and professionalism. The St. Louis District recently held six, in-person, flood preparedness workshops across the expanse of their district. They came to us ... to our neighborhoods ... to our back yards ... and they partnered with us. They get it! We just wanted to thank you and those districts upfront before getting into our more formal statement.

We are at a pivotal moment on the Upper Mississippi River. The Great Flood of 1993 devastated the Midwest. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the flood led to the deaths of 47 people, damaged or destroyed more than 70,000 homes and caused the evacuation of approximately 74,000 people. The flood also caused anywhere from \$15 billion to \$20 billion in economic damages. Adjusted for inflation that amount would be more than doubled in today's dollars. An additional \$19 billion (\$42 billion adjusted for inflation) in economic damages was prevented by the flood control infrastructure in

place at that time. Flood control infrastructure works and it works well! Flood protection works! Please do not ever lose sight of that.

The people along the Upper Mississippi River came close to realizing their dream of a comprehensive system through the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan Study authorized by WRDA 99, however, when the Corps of Engineers released that study in 2008, they did not recommend a plan to address the flood problem and Congress took no action. So here we are today, 33 years after the devastation caused by the Great Flood of 1993, and we are no closer to a comprehensive flood control solution.

For this reason, the Midwest Flood Control Association is watching with great interest the ongoing Upper Miss Flow Frequency study. We have not been shy in communicating our concerns with this study and how the results will be used. We thank Mr. Joey Windham, your Chief of Water Control, and his staff for meeting with us in December and addressing our technical concerns. We trust Mr. Windham and we no longer have concerns from a technical hydraulics engineering standpoint.

The Midwest Flood Control Association still has deep concerns, however, on how those results will be used. We continue to emphasize that the Flow Frequency Study should not be done in a vacuum. As Mr. Camillo, our Executive Vice-President, testified before the House T&I subcommittee during the WRDA kick-off in December, we want the Corps of Engineers to have and use the data from the Flow Frequency Study to develop realistic, actionable solutions to offset or mitigate any resultant changes to the water surface and flood profiles. Yet, we must continue to strongly maintain that releasing new flood profiles without actionable solutions will impact levee accreditation and cause significant increases in flood insurance rates and significant decreases in property values.

Mr. James, last August, I believe you asked if we had any figures to support those claims. Many of our agricultural districts estimate that they would see a reduction in property values ranging from \$1,000 - \$2,000 per acre. For a levee district of 15,000 acres -- the average size of our agricultural districts -- that represents a reduction of \$15 to \$30 million in property values. Our urban districts on the other end of the spectrum also face severe impacts. The Southwestern Illinois Flood Prevention District that Vice Chairman Bruce Brinkman testified about last August represents the crown-jewel of our association's membership from the standpoint of risk and consequences as it protects more than 150,000 people living in 25 separate communities that support roughly 60,000 jobs. The district also protects refineries, manufacturing sites and portions of interstates 55, 64, and 70 from inundation. All told, the Southwestern Illinois Flood Prevention District protects more than \$18 billion in property values. It is estimated that the district will see a 20-30% reduction in property values -- \$3.6 billion to \$5.4 billion --

if it were to lose its 500-year level of protection. Mr. James, I hope this is the type of statistics that you were looking for.

If the Flow Frequency Study results in changes to the water surface and flood profiles and does nothing else, it serves few other purposes than to be used as a regulatory tool for PL 84-99 compliance or FEMA accreditation. With this mind, the Midwest Flood Control Association formally asks for the support of the Mississippi River Commission, the Mississippi Valley Division and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a whole as we continue to work through our delegation to get legislation passed in the current WRDA bill that we believe helps us to preserve and maintain our current levels of protection and accreditation, while also strongly supporting the passage of a WRDA bill in 2026. Our immediate priorities for such a bill include:

- Limit the applicability/use of the results of the Flow Frequency Study to planning purposes only until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers develops actionable solutions to address or offset any potential changes to water surface elevations and flood profiles.
- Prevent agencies from using the preliminary data from the Flow Frequency Study as a regulatory enforcement tool for P.L. 84-99 eligibility/enforcement or FEMA until the Corps of Engineers develops actionable solutions through the flood resiliency study authorized in Section 1227 of WRDA 2024.
- Develop a viable means for levee and drainage districts to maintain their current level of protection and accreditation at their own expense if the Flow Frequency Study result in documented changes to water surface elevations.

The Midwest Flood Control Association contends that our priorities are the “manageable, bite-sized” types of requests that Maj. Gen. Jason Kelley at the National Waterways Conference challenged us to develop to challenge the Corps. We further contend that our priorities capture the intent of the Honorable Adam Telle’s great “Build Infrastructure, Not Paperwork” initiative.

Before concluding, I would like to urge this Commission to read closely the Formal Statement Submitted for the Record by Mr. Tom Waters, one of our board members and the Chairman of the Missouri River Levee and Drainage District Association. The draft plan released by the Northwestern Division and the Kansas City/Omaha Districts under the Lower Missouri River Flood Risk and Resiliency Study carries some very ominous language and ideas that we believe every flood control advocate in the country should find alarming. For the sake of time, I will let Mr. Waters’ statement speak for itself, but we would be fully remiss if we did not point out that one of the stated objectives of the study is to “prevent the unwise use of the floodplain” and then proceeds to recommend

55 levee setbacks and 85 levee abandonments that will leave more than 20 percent of the agricultural lands currently protected by the levees as unprotected. As a Commission that prosecutes a flood control project that protects more than 22 million acres in the historic floodplain, we thought that you would find this interesting.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tim Maers".

Tim Maers,
Executive Director
Midwest Flood Control Association