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**JOINT STATEMENT ON GOV JOHN BEL EDWARDS' ANNOUNCEMENT
ABOUT DEEPENING KEY STRETCH OF MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

LaPLACE, LA.

Today, Governor John Bel Edwards along with Louisiana Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed the Project Partnership Agreement to deepen the Mississippi river from Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico.

A statement from governor Edwards says the project will deepen the lower portion of the Mississippi River from 45 feet to 50 feet. This will provide the depth needed for larger vessels to access ports at Plaquemines, New Orleans, South Louisiana and Baton Rouge.

“The Mississippi River is America’s greatest natural resource. Today’s announcement ensures that Louisiana Ports and agricultural products from the Midwest remain competitive in the global marketplace. In fact, the Mississippi River connects 31 states to the world and 60 percent of all grain exported from the U.S. is shipped via the River,” said Paul Aucoin, the Executive Director of the Port of South Louisiana, the largest port by tonnage in the Western Hemisphere. “I applaud the Governor for his tireless leadership and want to thank everyone that contributed to this historic accomplishment. It’s my hope that a fully dredged River will power our nation’s economy and help us recover from this terrible economic downturn caused by the pandemic.”

Statement from Sean M. Duffy, the Executive Director of the Big River Coalition:

“The Big River is now authorized and appropriated to Get Bigger, the deepening of the Ship Channel to 50 feet is a historic project will bring the nation’s most prolific artery of trade into the modern Post Panamax era. The deepening of this economic superhighway will offer significant cost savings to shippers and promote economy of scale efficiencies that will help stimulate trade for decades. As an Executive Director, I often say we win and lose as a team, and it is important for me to acknowledge the support of the Coalition’s Board (including the Port of South Louisiana) and the devoted membership. This is a win for the team, we win and lose together.”

America’s Largest Tonnage Port



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“The Coalition applauds the USACE and LDOTD for their professional support and recognizes the unwavering commitment from the navigation industry across the Mississippi River Basin. This project benefits multiple sectors, even wetlands restoration through the beneficial use of dredged material. The acreage created by the deepening project will raise the total to over 12,000 acres that have been restored in the environmentally sensitive bird’s-foot delta since 2009.”

Background:

The Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) is a critical step that establishes a legally binding agreement between the Government (USACE) and a non-federal sponsor (LDOTD) for construction of a water resources project (Mississippi River Ship Channel Deepening). The PPA details the official description of the project and list the responsibilities of the USACE and the LDOTD and documents the cost-sharing responsibilities and the schedule of work.

The effort to deepen the Mississippi River Ship Channel to 50 feet was revitalized by the Big River Coalition on August 25, 2012 after receiving a Memorandum from the USACE to their report to Congress on the nation’s preparedness for the deepening of the Panama Canal (50 feet).

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