

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2977

To establish the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative to carry out projects for the protection and restoration of the Mississippi River Corridor, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 21, 2025

Ms. MCCOLLUM introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative to carry out projects for the protection and restoration of the Mississippi River Corridor, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Mississippi River Res-
5 toration and Resilience Initiative Act” or the “MRRRI
6 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 It is the purpose of this Act to establish the Mis-
3 sissippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative to pro-
4 tect and restore the ecological health and resilience of the
5 Mississippi River for current and succeeding generations
6 of Americans and for the fish and wildlife that rely on
7 the Mississippi River and its floodplain. The MRRRI is
8 a nonregulatory initiative that will build upon existing ef-
9 forts and provide funding for projects and activities to
10 protect and restore the nationally significant resources of
11 the Mississippi River by—

12 (1) establishing the Mississippi River National
13 Program Office;

14 (2) establishing the focus areas and identifying
15 qualifying activities for MRRRI programs and
16 projects;

17 (3) directing the development of actionable
18 goals, an action plan, and a science plan, and reg-
19 ular updates to such plans, to guide the MRRRI and
20 ensuring the integration of the MRRRI with other
21 Federal, State, Tribal, and local programs;

22 (4) establishing criteria for measuring the suc-
23 cess of the MRRRI in restoring the ecological health
24 and resilience of the Mississippi River;

25 (5) requiring the Environmental Protection
26 Agency to coordinate and consult with Federal and

1 non-Federal stakeholders to implement the MRRRI;
 2 and

3 (6) establishing the Mississippi River Corridor
 4 Research Centers.

5 **SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE**
 6 **INITIATIVE.**

7 Title I of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
 8 (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
 9 the following:

10 **“SEC. 127. MISSISSIPPI RIVER.**

11 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 “(1) AGENCY.—The term ‘Agency’ means the
 13 Environmental Protection Agency.

14 “(2) HYPOXIA TASK FORCE.—The term ‘Hy-
 15 poxia Task Force’ means the Mississippi River/Gulf
 16 of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force established pursuant
 17 to section 603 of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hy-
 18 poxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C.
 19 4001).

20 “(3) MRRRI.—The term ‘MRRRI’ means the
 21 Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initia-
 22 tive established by this section.

23 “(4) PROGRAM OFFICE.—The term ‘Program
 24 Office’ means the Mississippi River National Pro-
 25 gram Office established by this section.

1 “(5) MRRRI DIRECTOR.—The term ‘MRRRI
2 Director’ means the Director of the Mississippi
3 River National Program Office established under
4 this section.

5 “(6) MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR.—The term
6 ‘Mississippi River Corridor’ means the portions of
7 the Mississippi River watershed (including tributary
8 watersheds) located in a Mississippi River State.

9 “(7) MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE.—The term
10 ‘Mississippi River State’ means Arkansas, Illinois,
11 Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi,
12 Missouri, Tennessee, or Wisconsin.

13 “(8) TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘Tribal
14 government’ means the recognized governing body of
15 an any Indian tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village,
16 community, component band, or component reserva-
17 tion, individually identified (including parentheti-
18 cally) in the list published pursuant to section 104
19 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of
20 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

21 “(9) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term ‘Tribal
22 organization’ has the meaning given such term in
23 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-
24 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

1 “(10) RELEVANT FEDERAL AGENCY.—The
2 term ‘relevant Federal agency’ means any of the fol-
3 lowing agencies:

4 “(A) The Department of Agriculture—

5 “(i) the Natural Resources Conserva-
6 tion Service; and

7 “(ii) the Forest Service.

8 “(B) The Department of the Interior, in-
9 cluding—

10 “(i) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

11 “(ii) the United States Fish and Wild-
12 life Service;

13 “(iii) the United States Geological
14 Survey; and

15 “(iv) the National Park Service.

16 “(C) The Corps of Engineers.

17 “(D) The Federal Emergency Management
18 Agency.

19 “(E) The National Oceanic and Atmos-
20 pheric Administration.

21 “(F) The Coast Guard.

22 “(G) Any other Federal agency the
23 MRRRI Director determines is relevant.

24 “(b) MISSISSIPPI RIVER NATIONAL PROGRAM OF-
25 FICE.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall es-
2 tablish a Mississippi River National Program Office
3 within the Agency to carry out the Mississippi River
4 Restoration and Resilience Initiative.

5 “(2) LOCATION.—The Program Office shall be
6 located in a Mississippi River State.

7 “(3) DIRECTOR.—The Program Office shall be
8 headed by a Director, appointed by the Adminis-
9 trator, who has management experience and tech-
10 nical expertise relating to the Mississippi River and
11 who is highly qualified to direct the development of
12 programs and plans on a variety of issues related to
13 restoration of the Mississippi River.

14 “(4) FUNCTIONS.—The MRRRI Director
15 shall—

16 “(A) coordinate actions of the Agency that
17 seek to protect and restore the Mississippi
18 River Corridor;

19 “(B) develop, implement, and update the
20 MRRRI, actionable goals, and action plan re-
21 quired by this section, in coordination with rel-
22 evant Federal agencies and non-Federal enti-
23 ties;

24 “(C) document information and updates
25 related to the development and implementation

1 of the MRRRI, actionable goals, and action
2 plan and make such information and updates
3 available to the public, including on a public
4 website;

5 “(D) facilitate engagement and consulta-
6 tion with Tribal governments and Tribal organi-
7 zations to ensure Tribal needs and priorities are
8 solicited early and throughout the development
9 of the actionable goals and action plan required
10 by this section;

11 “(E) work cooperatively with the Bureau
12 of Indian Affairs and other Federal agencies to
13 carry out subparagraph (D); and

14 “(F) submit to Congress, and make avail-
15 able on a public website, an annual report de-
16 scribing—

17 “(i) progress made in implementing
18 the MRRRI;

19 “(ii) the coordination of the MRRRI
20 with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local
21 programs;

22 “(iii) any funds transferred to rel-
23 evant Federal agencies under this section;

24 “(iv) any grants awarded under this
25 section; and

1 “(v) specific projects and activities
2 carried out pursuant to this section.

3 “(5) AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out paragraph
4 (4), the MRRRI Director may enter into agree-
5 ments, as applicable, with relevant Federal agencies
6 and non-Federal entities.

7 “(6) TRIBAL LIAISON.—The MRRRI Director
8 shall appoint a Tribal Liaison within the Program
9 Office to ensure enhanced interagency technical sup-
10 port, communication, and coordination with Tribal
11 governments, Tribal organizations, and Tribal stake-
12 holders, and to carry out other duties as determined
13 necessary to meet the needs of Tribes.

14 “(c) MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION AND RESIL-
15 IENCE INITIATIVE.—

16 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established
17 within the Agency the Mississippi River Restoration
18 and Resilience Initiative to implement projects for
19 systemic, large-scale restoration of the Mississippi
20 River Corridor.

21 “(2) FOCUS AREAS.—Any project or activity
22 carried out under this section shall address at least
23 1 of the following focus areas:

24 “(A) The improvement of water quality in
25 the Mississippi River Corridor and drinking

1 water quality in the Mississippi River States
2 by—

3 “(i) reducing the amount of polluted
4 runoff, excess agricultural nutrients, and
5 sediment in the Mississippi River Corridor;
6 and

7 “(ii) improving source water protec-
8 tions.

9 “(B) The improvement of community resil-
10 ience throughout the Mississippi River Corridor
11 by restoring the ability of the Mississippi River
12 floodplain, riverine wetlands, delta and coastal
13 wetlands, and backwaters to minimize and ame-
14 liorate flood and storm risks.

15 “(C) The protection and restoration of fish
16 and wildlife habitat in and along the Mississippi
17 River Corridor.

18 “(D) The prevention of the spread of
19 aquatic invasive species in the Mississippi River
20 Corridor.

21 “(E) The improvement of communication
22 and partnership activities related to the focus
23 areas described in subparagraphs (A) through
24 (D).

1 “(F) Monitoring, collecting, and evaluating
2 scientific data to assess the focus areas de-
3 scribed in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

4 “(3) PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Funds made available
6 to carry out the MRRRI may be used to imple-
7 ment eligible projects and activities described in
8 paragraph (5) that are carried out by a relevant
9 Federal agency or by a non-Federal entity.

10 “(B) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The MRRRI
11 Director, or the head of any other Federal
12 agency receiving funds under this section, may
13 make a grant to, or otherwise enter into an
14 agreement with, any non-Federal entity (includ-
15 ing any State, local, or Tribal governmental en-
16 tity, nonprofit organization, institution of high-
17 er education (as such term is defined in section
18 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
19 U.S.C. 1001)), or individual) that the MRRRI
20 Director or agency head determines is qualified
21 to carry out an eligible project described in
22 paragraph (5).

23 “(4) PROJECT SELECTION.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the
25 MRRRI, the MRRRI Director shall collaborate

1 with relevant Federal agencies to select projects
2 and activities to be implemented pursuant to
3 this section using appropriate principles and
4 criteria, including—

5 “(i) the selection of an equitable dis-
6 tribution of projects and activities along
7 the entire Mississippi River Corridor;

8 “(ii) the ability of a project to achieve
9 strategic and measurable environmental
10 outcomes;

11 “(iii) the recognition that projects
12 may provide benefits to local or regional
13 communities or to the entire Mississippi
14 River Corridor;

15 “(iv) the feasibility of prompt imple-
16 mentation, timely achievement of measur-
17 able results, and resource leveraging; and

18 “(v) the opportunity to improve inter-
19 agency, intergovernmental, and inter-
20 organizational coordination and collabora-
21 tion to reduce duplication and improve
22 measurable environmental outcomes.

23 “(B) COMPATIBILITY.—The MRRRI Di-
24 rector shall ensure that projects and activities

1 carried out under this section are compatible
2 with—

3 “(i) the ability of the Corps of Engi-
4 neers to maintain navigation in the Mis-
5 sissippi River; and

6 “(ii) the structural integrity or effec-
7 tiveness of Federal, State, local, or Tribal
8 disaster risk reduction infrastructure.

9 “(5) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—

10 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Funds made available
11 to carry out this section may only be used to
12 implement a project or activity that addresses
13 at least 1 of the focus areas described in para-
14 graph (2) and that carries out at least one of
15 the actions described in subparagraph (B).

16 “(B) ACTIONS DESCRIBED.—The actions
17 referred to in subparagraph (A) are actions
18 that—

19 “(i) protect or restore naturally occur-
20 ring hydrologic, geomorphic, and ecological
21 functions and processes, including the res-
22 toration or rehabilitation of wetlands, in-
23 stream habitats (including through re-
24 connection of side channels and back-

1 waters), living shorelines, or upland habi-
2 tats;

3 “(ii) remove or modify structures, in-
4 cluding culverts, levees, and dams, to re-
5 store—

6 “(I) natural hydrology of rivers,
7 streams, floodplains, wetlands, or
8 coasts; or

9 “(II) the form, function, or proc-
10 esses of rivers, streams, floodplains,
11 wetlands, or coasts;

12 “(iii) permanently protect privately
13 owned lands through fee title acquisition or
14 enrollment into voluntary permanent wet-
15 land, flooding, or other conservation ease-
16 ments;

17 “(iv) facilitate habitat restoration
18 using responsibly sourced and clean
19 dredged sediment material by covering the
20 cost differential between the Federal
21 standard for dredge disposal and the cost
22 of transportation;

23 “(v) relocate, elevate, or demolish, and
24 clean up flood-prone structures, and carry
25 out any related floodplain restoration;

1 “(vi) increase water retention and in-
2 filtration through actions that promote a
3 healthy soil ecosystem, including maxi-
4 mizing soil cover, maximizing soil biodiver-
5 sity, and maximizing the presence of living
6 roots;

7 “(vii) reduce nonpoint sources of pol-
8 lution and promote landscape-scale vegeta-
9 tive cover (including perennial grains, pe-
10 rennial woody crops, winter annual cover
11 crops, perennial pasture, and other ap-
12 proaches to maintain year-round vegetative
13 cover) through the implementation of vol-
14 untary initiatives developed with the sup-
15 port of market research;

16 “(viii) reduce stormwater flows and
17 inflows that contribute to combined sewer
18 overflow events, and accelerate the adop-
19 tion of urban stormwater pollution preven-
20 tion minimum control measures through
21 municipal separate storm sewer system
22 permits issued under section 402(p);

23 “(ix) facilitate the cleanup of legacy
24 contaminants that are not hazardous sub-
25 stances (as defined in section 101 of the

1 Comprehensive Environmental Response,
2 Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980
3 (42 U.S.C. 9601)) or designated as haz-
4 ardous substances pursuant to section 102
5 of the Comprehensive Environmental Re-
6 sponse, Compensation, and Liability Act of
7 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9602);

8 “(x) control, manage, or eradicate
9 nonnative aquatic invasive species or re-
10 introduce native aquatic species, including
11 through—

12 “(I) investments in technology
13 and research to combat the spread of
14 aquatic invasive species;

15 “(II) the use of in-river physical
16 deterrent or controls; or

17 “(III) the promotion of commer-
18 cial harvesting of nonnative aquatic
19 species;

20 “(xi) build capacity within commu-
21 nities to undertake MRRRI projects to ad-
22 dress the effects of the ecological degrada-
23 tion of the Mississippi River Corridor, in-
24 cluding through—

1 “(I) community based
2 participatory research;

3 “(II) project or community-wide
4 planning;

5 “(III) outreach and community
6 engagement; or

7 “(IV) restoration-related job
8 training and workforce development;
9 or

10 “(xii) additional actions determined to
11 be eligible pursuant to subsection
12 (d)(2)(B)(v).

13 “(C) PROTECTION AGAINST INVASIVE
14 PLANT SPECIES.—Funds made available to
15 carry out this section may not be used for a
16 project or activity that proposes to use a plant
17 that has an elevated risk of becoming invasive,
18 as determined by the MRRRI Director through
19 the use of a credible weed risk assessment tool.

20 “(6) MONITORING PLAN.—A Federal agency or
21 non-Federal entity receiving funds to carry out a
22 project or activity under this section shall develop a
23 detailed plan for monitoring the implementation and
24 ecological success of such project or activity, as ap-
25 plicable, that—

1 “(A) describes criteria for ecological suc-
2 cess by which the project will be evaluated
3 based on replacement of lost functions and val-
4 ues of the Mississippi River Corridor habitat,
5 including hydrologic and vegetative characteris-
6 tics;

7 “(B) identifies an entity responsible for
8 such monitoring; and

9 “(C) includes continuation of such moni-
10 toring until the project is determined to be suc-
11 cessful based on documented achievement of the
12 ecological success criteria described under sub-
13 paragraph (A).

14 “(d) ACTIONABLE GOALS; ACTION PLANS.—

15 “(1) ACTIONABLE GOALS.—Not later than 1
16 year after the date of enactment of this section, the
17 MRRRI Director shall develop measurable goals for
18 the MRRRI, including establishing criteria for meas-
19 uring the success of the MRRRI in addressing the
20 focus areas established in subsection (c)(2) and in
21 restoring the overall ecological health and resilience
22 of the Mississippi River Corridor.

23 “(2) ACTION PLAN.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
25 after the date of enactment of this section, the

1 MRRRI Director shall develop an action plan to
2 make progress on the MRRRI through the im-
3 plementation of MRRRI projects and activities
4 under subsection (c).

5 “(B) CONTENTS.—The MRRRI Director
6 shall include in the action plan developed under
7 subparagraph (A)—

8 “(i) a description of existing Federal,
9 State, Tribal, and regional plans, pro-
10 grams, and activities affecting the Mis-
11 sissippi River Corridor that may be used to
12 advance the MRRRI;

13 “(ii) recommendations for a com-
14 prehensive approach to advancing systemic,
15 large-scale restoration of the Mississippi
16 River Corridor that, where appropriate,
17 leverages existing Federal and State pro-
18 grams;

19 “(iii) a multi-year plan that identifies
20 objectives within each of the focus areas
21 described in subsection (c)(2), with cor-
22 responding commitments for activities, re-
23 search, and measures for progress;

1 “(iv) a plan to monitor the implemen-
2 tation of any recommendations developed
3 under this subparagraph; and

4 “(v) a description of any additional
5 actions the Director determines are eligible
6 under this section.

7 “(C) PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS.—The
8 action plan described in subparagraph (A) may
9 include recommendations for specific projects or
10 activities that advance the objectives developed
11 under subparagraph (B)(iii), including
12 timelines, budgets, and the identification of en-
13 tities responsible for the implementation of such
14 projects.

15 “(3) UPDATES.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not less than once
17 every 5 years, the MRRRI Director shall review
18 and update the actionable goals and action plan
19 developed under this subsection.

20 “(B) INTEGRATION WITH SCIENCE
21 PLAN.—In updating the action plan pursuant to
22 this paragraph, the MRRRI Director shall in-
23 corporate any relevant information contained in
24 the science plan developed pursuant to section
25 4(b) of the MRRRI Act.

1 “(4) COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION.—In
2 developing and updating the actionable goals and ac-
3 tion plan required under this subsection, the MRRRI
4 Director shall—

5 “(A) consult with Mississippi River States,
6 Tribal governments within such States, the Sec-
7 retary of the Interior, the Chief of Engineers,
8 the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Hypoxia
9 Task Force;

10 “(B) engage with relevant Federal agen-
11 cies, local governments, nongovernmental orga-
12 nizations, institutions of higher education (as
13 defined in section 101 of the Higher Education
14 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)), and members
15 of the public; and

16 “(C) solicit input from the entities de-
17 scribed in subparagraph (B) through a formal
18 public notice and comment period.

19 “(e) FUNDING.—

20 “(1) TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO FEDERAL ENTI-
21 TIES.—With funds made available to carry out this
22 section for each fiscal year, the MRRRI Director
23 may—

24 “(A) transfer funds to the head of any rel-
25 evant Federal agency, with the concurrence of

1 the head of such agency, to carry out activities
2 in accordance with this section;

3 “(B) transfer funds to other Federal pro-
4 grams to be used for achieving specifically tar-
5 geted and measurable environmental outcomes
6 that advance the actionable goals developed and
7 updated under subsection (d); and

8 “(C) enter into an interagency agreement
9 with the head of any relevant Federal agency to
10 carry out activities in accordance with this sec-
11 tion.

12 “(2) TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO BUREAU OF IN-
13 DIAN AFFAIRS.—The MRRRI Director shall transfer
14 not less than 5 percent of the funds made available
15 to carry out this section to the Director of the Bu-
16 reau of Indian Affairs, with the concurrence of such
17 Director, to make grants or otherwise enter into
18 agreements with Tribal governments or Tribal orga-
19 nizations to carry out projects or activities under
20 this section.

21 “(3) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT
22 PROJECTS PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THE FIRST AC-
23 TION PLAN.—Before the date on which the first ac-
24 tion plan is developed under subsection (d)(2), the
25 MRRRI Director may transfer funds to another

1 Federal entity, or award a grant or otherwise enter
2 into an agreement with a non-Federal entity, to—

3 “(A) carry out projects or activities that
4 meet the requirements of subsection (c)(5); or

5 “(B) establish the research centers re-
6 quired under section 4(a) of the MRRRI Act.

7 “(4) COST SHARE.—

8 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
9 subparagraph (B), the Federal share of the cost
10 of a project or activity carried out by a non-
11 Federal entity under this section shall not ex-
12 ceed 80 percent of the total cost of the project
13 or activity.

14 “(B) EXCEPTION.—The Federal share of
15 the cost of a project or activity carried out by
16 a Tribal government or Tribal organization
17 under this section, and the Federal share of the
18 cost of a project or activity described in sub-
19 section (c)(5)(B)(xi) carried by a non-Federal
20 entity, shall be 100 percent of the total cost of
21 the project or activity.

22 “(C) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION.—The non-
23 Federal share of the cost of a project or activity
24 carried out under this section may include the

1 value of an in-kind contribution provided by a
2 non-Federal entity.

3 “(5) LIMITATIONS.—No funds made available
4 to carry out this section may be used for any water
5 infrastructure activity for which financial assistance
6 is received under—

7 “(A) a State water pollution control revolv-
8 ing fund established under section 603;

9 “(B) a State drinking water treatment re-
10 volving loan fund established under section
11 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42
12 U.S.C. 300j–12); or

13 “(C) the Water Infrastructure Finance and
14 Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et
15 seq.).

16 “(f) SET ASIDE FOR ACTION PLAN.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the total amount of
18 funds made available to carry out the MRRRI under
19 this section for each fiscal year beginning with the
20 first fiscal year after which the action plan required
21 under subsection (d)(2) is developed, not more than
22 5 percent may be used for projects and activities
23 that are eligible under subsection (c)(5), but that do
24 not address an objective identified in the action plan
25 under subsection (d)(2)(B)(iii).

1 “(2) PRIORITY.—In using funds under subpara-
2 graph (A), the MRRRI Director shall prioritize
3 projects that reduce the effects of natural disasters
4 or respond to emerging threats from natural disas-
5 ters.

6 “(g) ACTIVITIES BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The head of a relevant
8 Federal agency that is engaged in, or has authority
9 over, programs relating to research, monitoring, and
10 planning to maintain, enhance, preserve, or rehabili-
11 tate the environmental quality and natural resources
12 of the Mississippi River shall—

13 “(A) submit an annual report to the Ad-
14 ministrator describing the activities of the agen-
15 cy relating to the MRRRI;

16 “(B) strive to identify new projects and ac-
17 tivities to support the goals of the MRRRI;

18 “(C) ensure that any funding provided
19 through the MRRRI supplements, and does not
20 supplant, funding obtained through other agen-
21 cy budgets or other sources of funds for activi-
22 ties related to the Mississippi River; and

23 “(D) strive to maintain, and where possible
24 increase, the base level of funding for activities

1 of such agency related to the Mississippi River,
2 without regard to funding under the MRRRI.

3 “(h) BUDGET ITEM.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, in
5 the Agency’s annual budget submission to Congress,
6 include a funding request for the MRRRI as a sepa-
7 rate budget line item.

8 “(2) INCLUSION.—The budget justification for
9 the budget line item described in paragraph (1) shall
10 include the amount to support the operation and ac-
11 tivities of the Program Office.

12 “(i) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
13 tion may be construed to—

14 “(1) waive any requirement under any applica-
15 ble Federal environmental law, including—

16 “(A) this Act;

17 “(B) the National Environmental Policy
18 Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

19 “(C) the Endangered Species Act (16
20 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

21 “(D) the Fish and Wildlife Coordination
22 Act of 1934 (16 U.S.C. 662 et seq.); or

23 “(2) supplant the functions of the Hypoxia
24 Task Force.”.

1 **SEC. 4. MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR RESEARCH CENTERS**
2 **AND SCIENCE PLAN.**

3 (a) MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR RESEARCH CEN-
4 TERS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Inte-
6 rior shall coordinate with the MRRRI Director to es-
7 tablish a network of 3 Mississippi River Corridor
8 Research Centers within the United States Geologi-
9 cal Survey.

10 (2) LOCATION.—The network of research cen-
11 ters established under paragraph (1) shall consist
12 of—

13 (A) a National Mississippi River Corridor
14 Research Center located at an office of the
15 United States Geological Survey; and

16 (B) 2 regional research centers, each of
17 which shall be based out of a host university, as
18 follows:

19 (i) An Upper Mississippi River Re-
20 search Center located in the region from
21 the headwaters of the Mississippi River to
22 the confluence of the Ohio River.

23 (ii) A Lower Mississippi River Re-
24 search Center located in the region
25 downriver from the confluence of the Ohio
26 River to the Gulf of Mexico.

1 (3) FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the research
2 centers established under this subsection shall be
3 to—

4 (A) conduct scientific research on the
5 MRRRI focus areas described in section
6 127(c)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Con-
7 trol Act (as added by this Act);

8 (B) consult with and advise relevant Fed-
9 eral agencies on—

10 (i) the improvement of programs that
11 monitor water quality in the Mississippi
12 River Corridor and the health of the Mis-
13 sissippi River Corridor habitat or the es-
14 tablishment of such programs, where nec-
15 essary;

16 (ii) the impact of projects and activi-
17 ties carried out under the MRRRI; and

18 (iii) any additional goals, priorities,
19 metrics, and research objectives proposed
20 as part of the science plan described in
21 subsection (b)(2); and

22 (C) consult, and to the extent practicable,
23 collaborate with relevant Federal agencies and
24 non-Federal entities regarding research, moni-
25 toring, and other efforts to promote the restora-

tion and resiliency of the Mississippi River Corridor.

(4) INTEGRATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of the Interior shall ensure that research and other activities carried out under this subsection are carried out in coordination with other Federal research and monitoring activities related to efforts to promote the restoration and resiliency of the Mississippi River Corridor.

(b) SCIENCE PLAN.—

(1) MISSISSIPPI RIVER SCIENCE FORUM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the United States Geological Survey shall host a Mississippi River science forum with relevant Federal agencies, Mississippi River States, Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, academia, and other non-Federal entities to—

(i) share current science and identify data gaps and areas of concern related to the ecological health of the Mississippi River Corridor; and

(ii) determine the resources that are necessary to—

1 (I) address any data gaps and
2 areas of concern identified under
3 clause (i); and

4 (II) develop an integrated science
5 plan under paragraph (2).

6 (B) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days
7 after the Director of the United States Geologi-
8 cal Survey hosts the Mississippi River science
9 forum under subparagraph (A), the Director
10 shall submit a report on the findings from such
11 forum to—

12 (i) the Administrator of the Environ-
13 mental Protection Agency;

14 (ii) the MRRRI Director;

15 (iii) the Committee on Appropriations,
16 the Committee on Natural Resources, and
17 the Committee on Transportation and In-
18 frastructure of the House of Representa-
19 tives; and

20 (iv) the Committee on Appropriations
21 and the Committee on Energy and Natural
22 Resources of the Senate.

23 (2) SCIENCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT.—

24 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
25 after the conclusion of the Mississippi River

1 science forum required by paragraph (1), the
2 Director of the United States Geological Survey
3 shall develop a science plan that establishes pri-
4 orities, metrics, and research proposals for the
5 MRRRI.

6 (B) SUBMISSION.—Upon completion of the
7 science plan developed under this paragraph,
8 the Director of the United States Geological
9 Survey shall make such plan available on a pub-
10 lic website and submit such plan to the MRRRI
11 Director to inform the implementation of the
12 actionable goals and action plans developed for
13 the MRRRI under section 127(d) of the Fed-
14 eral Water Pollution Control Act (as added by
15 this Act).

16 (C) UPDATES.—Not less than once every 5
17 years, the Director of the United States Geo-
18 logical Survey shall coordinate with the MRRRI
19 Director and the research centers established
20 under subsection (a) to review and update the
21 science plan developed under this subsection.

22 (D) COORDINATION.—In developing and
23 updating the science plan, the Director shall so-
24 licit input and comment from the public

1 through a formal public notice and comment
2 period.

3 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act, the terms “MRRRI”, “MRRRI Direc-
5 tor”, “Mississippi River Corridor”, “Mississippi River
6 State”, “relevant Federal agency”, “Tribal government”,
7 and “Tribal organization” have the meanings given such
8 terms in section 127(a) of the Federal Water Pollution
9 Control Act, as added by this Act.

○