

Rep. Mary Miller T&I Member Day 2024 Testimony

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen: thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Illinois' 15th District.

I am here today to speak in support of my bill: H.R. 5722 – The Upper Mississippi River Levee Safety Act, which I strongly urge the Committee to include in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

Levees along the Upper Mississippi River protect countless homes and thousands of acres of farmland from flooding. They are essential to residents, farmers, and business owners who live and work along the Upper Mississippi.

This legislation would give local levee districts along the Upper Mississippi River more flexibility to maintain their systems and allow them to better prepare for future floods by addressing the federal regulatory challenges that make levee maintenance and improvements difficult.

This bill directs the US Army Corps of Engineers to issue more frequent design standard updates, which will help levee districts better respond to changing rain and flood patterns. This compliments the investment that Congress has already supported through NESP and affirms Congressional intent in how the Army Corps regulates levee operators along the Upper Mississippi River.

I am pleased to be joined on this bill on a bipartisan basis by several of my colleagues in the Illinois delegation, and on this Committee. This legislation has the support of regional stakeholders, including the Upper Mississippi, Illinois & Missouri Rivers Association, the Illinois Farm Bureau, and Corn Belt Ports, as well as local leaders in my district.

Again, I thank you for your consideration and the chance to speak here today. I urge the Committee to give this measure strong consideration as it works to draft WRDA 2024 and look forward to working with my colleagues to address these issues, which are critically important to Illinois, and every other state in the Upper Mississippi region. Thank you.