

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7289

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

FEBRUARY 7, 2024

Ms. MCCOLLUM (for herself, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. PHILLIPS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. BUSH, and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin) 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

7 (1) The Mississippi River flows more than
8 2,300 miles from its source at Lake Itasca through
9 the center of the continental United States to the
10 Gulf of Mexico.

11 (2) The main stem of the Mississippi River
12 flows through 10 States that collectively are home to
13 55.4 million people as of 2019.

14 (3) The Mississippi River provides drinking
15 water to more than 20 million people in 50 cities.

16 (4) The Mississippi River drives a vibrant nat-
17 ural resource and recreation-based economy that
18 generates nearly \$500 billion in annual revenue and
19 directly employs more than 1.5 million people.

20 (5) The Mississippi River and its 30 million
21 acre floodplain provide an ecological lifeline for all of
22 North America, supporting more than 780 species of
23 fish and wildlife and providing a vital migration cor-
24 ridor for 60 percent of all North American birds and
25 40 percent of the migratory waterfowl in the United
26 States.

1 (6) The Mississippi River serves as a major
2 transportation corridor for grain and cargo.

3 (7) Congress has designated the Mississippi
4 River System as a nationally significant ecosystem
5 and a nationally significant navigation system and is
6 the only inland river system to receive both designa-
7 tions.

8 (8) Despite its critical value to the United
9 States, the Mississippi River is in a severe state of
10 ecological decline, as documented by the United
11 States Geological Survey, the Army Corps of Engi-
12 neers, and other Federal and State agencies.

13 (9) Modifications to the Mississippi River have
14 resulted in the extensive loss of wetlands and com-
15 plex river habitats causing profound harm to the
16 treasured fish and wildlife resources in the United
17 States and increasing flood risks to communities.

18 (10) Polluted runoff has drastically reduced
19 water quality and created a massive dead zone in the
20 Gulf of Mexico.

21 (11) Invasive aquatic species threaten the eco-
22 logical integrity of the Mississippi River and Gulf of
23 Mexico, and the fisheries and recreation that rely on
24 a healthy ecosystem.

10 (13) The consequences of ecological degradation
11 have disproportionately harmed rural communities,
12 economically disadvantaged communities, and com-
13 munities of color.

19 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to estab-
20 lish the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Ini-
21 tiative to protect and restore the ecological health and re-
22 silience of the Mississippi River for current and succeeding
23 generations of Americans and for the fish and wildlife that
24 rely on the Mississippi River and its floodplain. The
25 MRRRI is a nonregulatory initiative that will build upon

1 existing efforts and provide funding for projects and ac-
2 tivities to protect and restore the nationally significant re-
3 sources of the Mississippi River by—

4 (1) establishing the Mississippi River National
5 Program Office;

6 (2) establishing the focus areas and identifying
7 qualifying activities for MRRRI programs and
8 projects;

9 (3) directing the development of actionable
10 goals, an action plan, and a science plan, and reg-
11 ular updates to such plans, to guide the MRRRI and
12 ensuring the integration of the MRRRI with other
13 Federal, State, Tribal, and local programs;

14 (4) establishing criteria for measuring the suc-
15 cess of the MRRRI in restoring the ecological health
16 and resilience of the Mississippi River;

17 (5) requiring the Environmental Protection
18 Agency to coordinate and consult with Federal and
19 non-Federal stakeholders to implement the MRRRI;
20 and

21 (6) establishing the Mississippi River Corridor
22 Research Centers.

1 **SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE**

2 **INITIATIVE.**

3 Title I of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
4 (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
5 the following:

6 **“SEC. 127. MISSISSIPPI RIVER.**

7 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

10 “(2) MRRRI.—The term ‘MRRRI’ means the
11 Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initia-
12 tive established by this section.

13 “(3) PROGRAM OFFICE.—The term ‘Program
14 Office’ means the Mississippi River National Pro-
15 gram Office established by this section.

16 “(4) MRRRI DIRECTOR.—The term ‘MRRRI
17 Director’ means the Director of the Mississippi
18 River National Program Office established under
19 this section.

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

24 “(6) MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE.—The term
25 ‘Mississippi River State’ means Arkansas, Illinois,

1 Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi,
2 Missouri, Tennessee, or Wisconsin.

3 “(7) TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘Tribal
4 government’ means the recognized governing body of
5 an any Indian tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village,
6 community, component band, or component reserva-
7 tion, individually identified (including parentheti-
8 cally) in the list published pursuant to section 104
9 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of
10 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

11 “(8) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term ‘Tribal
12 organization’ has the meaning given such term in
13 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-
14 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

15 “(9) RURAL.—The term ‘rural’ means an area
16 that is not delineated by the Bureau of the Census
17 as an urbanized area or an urban cluster based on
18 decennial census results.

19 “(10) ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMU-
20 NITY.—The term ‘economically disadvantaged com-
21 munity’ means any census block group in which 30
22 percent or more of the population are individuals
23 with an annual household income equal to, or less
24 than, the greater of—

1 “(A) an amount equal to 80 percent of the
2 median income of the area in which the house-
3 hold is located, as reported by the Department
4 of Housing and Urban Development; and
5 “(B) an amount equal to 200 percent of
6 the Federal poverty line.

7 “(11) COMMUNITY OF COLOR.—The term ‘com-
8 munity of color’ means a geographically distinct area
9 in which the population of any of the following cat-
10 egories of individuals is higher than the average pop-
11 ulation of such category for the State in which the
12 geographically distinct area is located:

- 13 “(A) Black.
- 14 “(B) African American.
- 15 “(C) Asian.
- 16 “(D) Pacific Islander.
- 17 “(E) Hispanic.
- 18 “(F) Latino.

19 “(G) Indian (as such term is defined in
20 section 202 of the Indian Land Consolidation
21 Act (25 U.S.C. 2201)).

22 “(12) RELEVANT FEDERAL AGENCY.—The
23 term ‘relevant Federal agency’ means any of the fol-
24 lowing agencies:

- 25 “(A) The Department of Agriculture—

1 “(i) the Natural Resources Conserva-
2 tion Service; and

3 “(ii) the Forest Service.

4 “(B) The Department of the Interior, in-
5 cluding—

6 “(i) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

7 “(ii) the United States Fish and Wild-
8 life Service;

9 “(iii) the United States Geological
10 Survey; and

11 “(iv) the National Park Service.

12 “(C) The Corps of Engineers.

13 “(D) The Federal Emergency Management
14 Agency.

15 “(E) The National Oceanic and Atmos-
16 pheric Administration.

17 “(F) The Coast Guard.

18 “(G) Any other Federal agency the
19 MRRRI Director determines is relevant.

20 “(b) MISSISSIPPI RIVER NATIONAL PROGRAM OF-
21 FICE.—

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

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

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

10 “(4) FUNCTIONS.—The MRRRI Director
11 shall—

12 “(A) coordinate actions of the Agency that
13 seek to protect and restore the Mississippi
14 River Corridor;

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

20 “(C) document information and updates
21 related to the development and implementation
22 of the MRRRI, actionable goals, and action
23 plan and make such information and updates
24 available to the public, including on a public
25 website;

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

7 “(E) work cooperatively with the Bureau
8 of Indian Affairs and other Federal agencies to
9 carry out subparagraph (D); and

10 “(F) submit to Congress, and make avail-
11 able on a public website, an annual report de-
12 scribing—

13 “(i) progress made in implementing
14 the MRRRI;

15 “(ii) the coordination of the MRRRI
16 with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local
17 programs;

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

20 “(iv) any grants awarded under this
21 section; and

22 “(v) specific projects and activities
23 carried out pursuant to this section.

24 “(5) AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out paragraph
25 (4), the MRRRI Director may enter into agree-

1 ments, as applicable, with relevant Federal agencies
2 and non-Federal entities.

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

10 “(c) MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION AND RESIL-
11 IENCE INITIATIVE.—

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

17 “(2) FOCUS AREAS.—Any project or activity
18 carried out under this section shall address at least
19 1 of the following focus areas:

20 “(A) The improvement of water quality in
21 the Mississippi River Corridor and drinking
22 water quality in the Mississippi River States
23 by—

24 “(i) reducing the amount of polluted
25 runoff, excess agricultural nutrients, and

1 sediment in the Mississippi River Corridor;
2 and

3 “(ii) improving source water protec-
4 tions.

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

11 “(C) The protection and restoration of fish
12 and wildlife habitat in and along the Mississippi
13 River Corridor.

14 “(D) The prevention of the spread of
15 aquatic invasive species in the Mississippi River
16 Corridor.

17 “(E) The improvement of communication
18 and partnership activities related to the focus
19 areas described in subparagraphs (A) through
20 (D).

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

24 “(3) PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.—

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

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

19 “(4) PROJECT SELECTION.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the
21 MRRRI, the MRRRI Director shall collaborate
22 with relevant Federal agencies to select projects
23 and activities to be implemented pursuant to
24 this section using appropriate principles and
25 criteria, including—

1 “(i) the selection of an equitable dis-
2 tribution of projects and activities along
3 the entire Mississippi River Corridor;

4 “(ii) the ability of a project to achieve
5 strategic and measurable environmental
6 outcomes;

7 “(iii) the recognition that projects
8 may provide benefits to local or regional
9 communities or to the entire Mississippi
10 River Corridor;

11 “(iv) the feasibility of prompt imple-
12 mentation, timely achievement of measur-
13 able results, and resource leveraging; and

14 “(v) the opportunity to improve inter-
15 agency, intergovernmental, and inter-
16 organizational coordination and collabora-
17 tion to reduce duplication and improve
18 measurable environmental outcomes.

19 “(B) PRIORITY.—In selecting projects and
20 activities under this paragraph, the MRRRI Di-
21 rector shall give priority to projects or activities
22 that carry out actions described in paragraph
23 (5)(B)(xi).

24 “(C) COMPATIBILITY.—The MRRRI Di-
25 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 habitats;

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) address the disproportionate ef-
21 fects of the ecological degradation of the
22 Mississippi River Corridor on economically
23 disadvantaged communities in rural and
24 urban areas and on communities of color,
25 including 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 issippi 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 and the Secretary of Agriculture;

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

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

18 “(e) FUNDING.—

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

23 “(A) transfer funds to the head of any rel-
24 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 “(6) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
17 this section may be construed to waive any require-
18 ment under any applicable Federal environmental
19 law, including—

20 “(A) this Act;

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

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

1 “(D) the Fish and Wildlife Coordination
2 Act of 1934 (16 U.S.C. 662 et seq.).

3 “(f) SET-ASIDE.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the total amount of
5 funds made available to carry out the MRRRI under
6 this section for each fiscal year—

7 “(A) not less than 25 percent shall be used
8 for projects or activities that carry out actions
9 described in subsection (c)(5)(B)(xi); and

10 “(B) not less than 10 percent shall be used
11 for projects or activities carried out in a per-
12 sistent poverty county that has had poverty
13 rates of 20 percent or greater, as determined by
14 the Bureau of the Census, for at least 30 con-
15 secutive years preceding such fiscal year.

16 “(2) ACTION PLAN.—

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

1 an objective identified in the action plan under
2 subsection (d)(2)(B)(iii).

3 “(B) PRIORITY.—In using funds under
4 subparagraph (A), the MRRRI Director shall
5 prioritize projects that reduce the effects of nat-
6 ural disasters or respond to emerging threats
7 from natural disasters.

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

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

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

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

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

1 “(D) strive to maintain, and where possible
2 increase, the base level of funding for activities
3 of such agency related to the Mississippi River,
4 without regard to funding under the MRRRI.

5 “(h) BUDGET ITEM.—

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

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

14 **SEC. 4. MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR RESEARCH CENTERS
15 AND SCIENCE PLAN.**

16 (a) MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR RESEARCH CEN-
17 TERS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Inter-
19 rior shall coordinate with the MRRRI Director to es-
20 tablish a network of 4 Mississippi River Corridor
21 Research Centers within the United States Geologi-
22 cal Survey.

23 (2) LOCATION.—The network of research cen-
24 ters established under paragraph (1) shall consist
25 of—

(B) 3 regional research centers, each of which shall be based out of a host university, as follows:

20 (3) FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the research
21 centers established under this subsection shall be
22 to—

23 (A) conduct scientific research on the
24 MRRRI focus areas described in section

1 127(c)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Con-
2 trol Act (as added by this Act);

3 (B) consult with and advise relevant Fed-
4 eral agencies on—

5 (i) the improvement of programs that
6 monitor water quality in the Mississippi
7 River Corridor and the health of the Mis-
8 sissippi River Corridor habitat or the es-
9 tablishment of such programs, where nec-
10 essary;

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

13 (iii) any additional goals, priorities,
14 metrics, and research objectives proposed
15 as part of the science plan described in
16 subsection (b)(2); and

17 (C) consult, and to the extent practicable,
18 collaborate with relevant Federal agencies and
19 non-Federal entities regarding research, moni-
20 toring, and other efforts to promote the restora-
21 tion and resiliency of the Mississippi River Cor-
22 ridor.

23 (4) INTEGRATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL AC-
24 TIVITIES.—The Secretary of the Interior shall en-
25 sure that research and other activities carried out

1 under this subsection are carried out in coordination
2 with other Federal research and monitoring activities
3 related to efforts to promote the restoration and
4 resiliency of the Mississippi River Corridor.

5 (b) SCIENCE PLAN.—

6 (1) MISSISSIPPI RIVER SCIENCE FORUM.—

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

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

19 (ii) determine the resources that are
20 necessary to—

21 (I) address any data gaps and
22 areas of concern identified under
23 clause (i); and

24 (II) develop an integrated science
25 plan under paragraph (2).

(i) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency;

(ii) the MRRRI Director;

10 (iii) the Committee on Appropriations
11 and the Committee on Natural Resources
12 and the Committee on Transportation and
13 Infrastructure of the House of Representa-
14 tives; and

15 (iv) the Committee on Appropriations
16 and the Committee on Energy and Natural
17 Resources of the Senate.

18 (2) SCIENCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT.—

(B) SUBMISSION.—Upon completion of the science plan developed under this paragraph, the Director of the United States Geological Survey shall make such plan available on a public website and submit such plan to the MRRRI Director to inform the implementation of the actionable goals and action plans developed for the MRRRI under section 127(d) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (as added by this Act).

17 (D) COORDINATION.—In developing and
18 updating the science plan, the Director shall so-
19 licit input and comment from the public
20 through a formal public notice and comment
21 period.

22 SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

23 In this Act, the terms “MRRRI”, “MRRRI Direc-
24 tor”, “Mississippi River Corridor”, “Mississippi River
25 State”, “relevant Federal agency”, “Tribal government”,

1 and “Tribal organization” have the meanings given such
2 terms in section 127(a) of the Federal Water Pollution
3 Control Act, as added by this Act.

