

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4202

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

JUNE 28, 2021

Ms. MCCOLLUM (for herself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. BUSH, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. YARMUTH) 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. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

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

3 (1) The Mississippi River flows more than
4 2,300 miles from its source at Lake Itasca through
5 the center of the continental United States to the
6 Gulf of Mexico.

7 (2) The main stem of the Mississippi River
8 flows through 10 States that collectively are home to
9 55.4 million people as of 2019.

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

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

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

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

25 (7) Congress has designated the Mississippi
26 River System as a nationally significant ecosystem

1 and a nationally significant navigation system and is
2 the only inland river system to receive both designa-
3 tions.

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

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

14 (10) Polluted runoff has drastically reduced
15 water quality and created a massive dead zone in the
16 Gulf of Mexico.

17 (11) Invasive aquatic species threaten the eco-
18 logical integrity of the Mississippi River and Gulf of
19 Mexico, and the fisheries and recreation that rely on
20 a healthy ecosystem.

21 (12) Ecological degradation of the Mississippi
22 River has resulted in—

23 (A) more flooding;

24 (B) less wildlife;

25 (C) fewer jobs;

1 (D) reduced recreational opportunities; and

2 (E) higher costs for keeping communities
3 safe and ensuring that communities have clean
4 drinking water.

5 (13) The consequences of ecological degradation
6 have disproportionately harmed rural communities,
7 economically disadvantaged communities, and com-
8 munities of color.

9 (14) Existing Federal programs lack sufficient
10 coordination, funding, and participation with States,
11 Tribes, local governments, and nongovernmental or-
12 ganizations to address these ongoing challenges and
13 reverse the decline of the Mississippi River.

14 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to estab-
15 lish the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Ini-
16 tiative to protect and restore the ecological health and re-
17 silience of the Mississippi River for current and succeeding
18 generations of Americans and for the fish and wildlife that
19 rely on the Mississippi River and its floodplain. The
20 MRRRI is a nonregulatory initiative that will build upon
21 existing efforts and provide funding for projects and ac-
22 tivities to protect and restore the nationally significant re-
23 sources of the Mississippi River by—

24 (1) establishing the Mississippi River National
25 Program Office;

1 (2) establishing the focus areas and identifying
2 qualifying activities for MRRRI programs and
3 projects;

4 (3) directing the development of actionable
5 goals, an action plan, and a science plan, and reg-
6 ular updates to such plans, to guide the MRRRI;

7 (4) establishing criteria for measuring the suc-
8 cess of the MRRRI in restoring the ecological health
9 and resilience of the Mississippi River;

10 (5) requiring the Environmental Protection
11 Agency to coordinate and consult with Federal and
12 non-Federal stakeholders to implement the MRRRI;
13 and

14 (6) establishing the Mississippi River Corridor
15 Research Centers.

16 **SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE**
17 **INITIATIVE.**

18 Title I of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
19 (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
20 the following:

21 **“SEC. 124. MISSISSIPPI RIVER.**

22 “(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

23 “(1) **AGENCY.**—The term ‘Agency’ means the
24 Environmental Protection Agency.

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

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

7 “(4) MRRRI DIRECTOR.—The term ‘MRRRI
8 Director’ means the Director of the Mississippi
9 River National Program Office established by this
10 section.

11 “(5) RIVER HABITAT.—The term ‘river habitat’
12 means the natural alluvial valley of the Mississippi
13 River, including the river itself and the full extent
14 of the river’s natural floodplain, and extending bluff-
15 top to bluff-top where such river topography exists.

16 “(6) MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR.—The term
17 ‘Mississippi River Corridor’ means the portions of
18 the Mississippi River watershed (including direct
19 tributary watersheds) located in a Mississippi River
20 State.

21 “(7) MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE.—The term
22 ‘Mississippi River State’ means Arkansas, Illinois,
23 Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi,
24 Missouri, Tennessee, or Wisconsin.

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

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

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

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

23 “(A) an amount equal to 80 percent of the
24 median income of the area in which the house-

1 hold is located, as reported by the Department
2 of Housing and Urban Development; and

3 “(B) an amount equal to 200 percent of
4 the Federal poverty line.

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

11 “(A) Black.

12 “(B) African American.

13 “(C) Asian.

14 “(D) Pacific Islander.

15 “(E) Hispanic.

16 “(F) Latino.

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

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

23 “(A) The Corps of Engineers.

24 “(B) The United States Fish and Wildlife
25 Service.

1 “(C) The Natural Resources Conservation
2 Service.

3 “(D) The Forest Service.

4 “(E) The United States Geological Survey.

5 “(F) The National Park Service.

6 “(G) The Federal Emergency Management
7 Agency.

8 “(H) The National Oceanic and Atmos-
9 pheric Administration.

10 “(I) The Coast Guard.

11 “(J) Any other Federal agency the
12 MRRRI Director determines is relevant.

13 “(b) MISSISSIPPI RIVER NATIONAL PROGRAM OF-
14 FICE.—

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

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

21 “(3) DIRECTOR.—The Program Office shall be
22 headed by a Director, appointed by the Adminis-
23 trator, who has management experience and tech-
24 nical expertise relating to the Mississippi River and
25 who is highly qualified to direct the development of

1 programs and plans on a variety of issues related to
2 restoration of the Mississippi River.

3 “(4) FUNCTIONS.—The Program Office shall—

4 “(A) coordinate actions of the Agency that
5 seek to protect and restore the Mississippi
6 River Corridor;

7 “(B) develop, implement, and update the
8 MRRRI, actionable goals, and action plan re-
9 quired by this section, in coordination with rel-
10 evant Federal agencies and non-Federal stake-
11 holders;

12 “(C) document information and updates
13 related to the development and implementation
14 of the MRRRI, actionable goals, and action
15 plan and make such information and updates
16 available to the public, including on a public
17 website; and

18 “(D) submit to Congress, and make avail-
19 able on a public website, an annual report de-
20 scribing—

21 “(i) progress made in implementing
22 the MRRRI;

23 “(ii) any funds transferred to relevant
24 Federal agencies under this section;

1 “(iii) any grants awarded under this
2 section; and

3 “(iv) specific projects and activities
4 carried out pursuant to this section.

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

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

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

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

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

23 “(i) reducing the amount of polluted
24 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 by restoring the ability of the Mississippi
7 River floodplain, riverine wetlands, delta and
8 coastal wetlands, and backwaters to minimize
9 and ameliorate flood and storm risks.

10 “(C) The protection and restoration of
11 wildlife habitat in and along the river habitat.

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

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

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

22 “(3) PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Funds made available
24 to carry out the MRRRI may be used to imple-
25 ment eligible projects and activities described in

1 paragraph (5) that are carried out by a relevant
2 Federal agency or by a non-Federal entity.

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

16 “(4) PROJECT SELECTION.—

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

23 “(i) the selection of an equitable dis-
24 tribution of projects and activities along
25 the entire Mississippi River Corridor;

1 “(ii) the ability of a project to achieve
2 strategic and measurable environmental
3 outcomes;

4 “(iii) the recognition that projects
5 may provide benefits to local or regional
6 communities or to the entire Mississippi
7 River Corridor;

8 “(iv) the feasibility of prompt imple-
9 mentation, timely achievement of measur-
10 able results, and resource leveraging; and

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

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

21 “(5) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Funds made available
23 to carry out this section may only be used to
24 implement a project or activity that addresses
25 at least 1 of the focus areas described in para-

1 graph (2) and that carries out at least one of
2 the actions described in subparagraph (B).

3 “(B) ACTIONS DESCRIBED.—The actions
4 referred to in subparagraph (A) are actions
5 that—

6 “(i) protect or restore naturally occur-
7 ring hydrologic, geomorphic, and ecological
8 functions and processes, including the res-
9 toration or rehabilitation of wetlands, in-
10 stream habitats (including through re-
11 connection of side channels and back-
12 waters), living shorelines, or upland habi-
13 tats;

14 “(ii) remove or modify structures such
15 as culverts, levees, and dams to restore
16 natural hydrology or restore the form,
17 function, or processes of rivers, streams,
18 floodplains, wetlands, or coasts;

19 “(iii) permanently protect privately
20 owned lands through fee title acquisition or
21 enrollment into permanent wetland, flood-
22 ing, or other conservation easements;

23 “(iv) improve water quality and water
24 retention through voluntary conservation

1 easements or other similar permanent land
2 protections with enhanced flexibility;

3 “(v) facilitate habitat restoration
4 using responsibly sourced and clean
5 dredged sediment material by covering the
6 cost differential between the Federal
7 standard for dredge disposal and the cost
8 of transportation;

9 “(vi) relocate, elevate, or demolish,
10 and clean up flood-prone structures, and
11 carry out any related floodplain restora-
12 tion;

13 “(vii) increase water retention and in-
14 filtration through actions that promote a
15 healthy soil ecosystem, including maxi-
16 mizing soil cover, maximizing soil biodiver-
17 sity, and maximizing the presence of living
18 roots;

19 “(viii) reduce nonpoint sources of pol-
20 lution and promote landscape-scale vegeta-
21 tive cover (including perennial grains, pe-
22 rennial woody crops, winter annual cover
23 crops, perennial pasture, and other ap-
24 proaches to maintain year-round vegetative
25 cover) through the implementation of vol-

1 untary initiatives developed with the sup-
2 port of market research;

3 “(ix) reduce stormwater flows and
4 inflows that contribute to combined sewer
5 overflow events, and accelerate the adop-
6 tion of urban stormwater pollution preven-
7 tion minimum control measures through
8 municipal separate storm sewer system
9 permits issued under section 402(p);

10 “(x) facilitate the cleanup of legacy
11 contaminants not otherwise carried out
12 under the Comprehensive Environmental
13 Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
14 of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.);

15 “(xi) control, manage, or eradicate
16 nonnative aquatic species or reintroduce
17 native aquatic species, including through—

18 “(I) investments in technology
19 and research to combat the spread of
20 invasive species;

21 “(II) the use of in-river physical
22 deterrent or controls; or

23 “(III) the promotion of commer-
24 cial harvesting of nonnative aquatic
25 species;

1 “(xii) address the disproportionate ef-
2 fects of the ecological degradation of the
3 Mississippi River Corridor on economically
4 disadvantaged communities in rural and
5 urban areas and on communities of color,
6 including through—

7 “(I) community based
8 participatory research;

9 “(II) project or community-wide
10 planning;

11 “(III) outreach and community
12 engagement; or

13 “(IV) restoration-related job
14 training and workforce development;
15 or

16 “(xiii) additional actions determined
17 to be eligible pursuant to subsection
18 (d)(2)(B)(v).

19 “(6) MONITORING PLAN.—A Federal agency or
20 non-Federal entity receiving funds to carry out a
21 project or activity under this section shall develop a
22 detailed plan for monitoring the implementation and
23 ecological success of such project or activity, as ap-
24 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 river habitat, including hydrologic
5 and vegetative characteristics;

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

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

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

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

22 “(2) ACTION PLAN.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
24 after the date of enactment of this section, the
25 MRRRI Director shall develop an action plan to

1 make progress on the MRRRI through the im-
2 plementation of MRRRI projects and activities
3 under subsection (c).

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

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

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

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

23 “(iv) a plan to monitor the implemen-
24 tation of any recommendations developed
25 under this subparagraph; and

1 “(v) a description of any additional
2 actions the Director determines are eligible
3 under this section.

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

12 “(3) UPDATES.—

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

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

23 “(4) COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION.—In
24 developing and updating the actionable goals and ac-

1 tion plan required under this subsection, the MRRRI
2 Director shall—

3 “(A) consult with Mississippi River States,
4 Tribal governments within such States, and the
5 Department of the Interior;

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

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

15 “(e) FUNDING.—

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

20 “(A) transfer funds to the head of any rel-
21 evant Federal agency, with the concurrence of
22 the head of such agency, to carry out activities
23 in accordance with this section;

24 “(B) transfer funds to other Federal pro-
25 grams to be used for achieving specifically tar-

1 geted and measurable environmental outcomes
2 that advance the actionable goals developed and
3 updated under subsection (d); and

4 “(C) enter into an interagency agreement
5 with the head of any relevant Federal agency to
6 carry out activities in accordance with this sec-
7 tion.

8 “(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT
9 PROJECTS PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THE FIRST AC-
10 TION PLAN.—Before the date on which the first ac-
11 tion plan is developed under subsection (d)(2), the
12 MRRRI Director may transfer funds to another
13 Federal entity, or award a grant or otherwise enter
14 into an agreement with a non-Federal entity, to—

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

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

19 “(3) COST SHARE.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
21 subparagraph (B), the Federal share of the cost
22 of a project or activity carried out by a non-
23 Federal entity under this section shall not ex-
24 ceed 80 percent of the total cost of the project
25 or activity.

1 “(B) EXCEPTION.—The Federal share of
2 the cost of a project or activity carried out by
3 a Tribal government or Tribal organization
4 under this section, and the Federal share of the
5 cost of a project or activity described in sub-
6 section (c)(5)(B)(xii) carried by a non-Federal
7 entity, shall be 100 percent of the total cost of
8 the project or activity.

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

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

15 “(B) a State drinking water treatment re-
16 volving loan fund established under section
17 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42
18 U.S.C. 300j–12); or

19 “(C) the Water Infrastructure Finance and
20 Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et
21 seq.).

22 “(5) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
23 this section may be construed to waive any require-
24 ment under any applicable Federal environmental
25 law, including this Act, the National Environmental

1 Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and the Endan-
2 gered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 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)(xii); 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 “(i) APPROPRIATIONS.—

15 “(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
16 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
17 this section \$300,000,000 for each of fiscal years
18 2022 and 2023 and such sums as may be necessary
19 for each fiscal year thereafter.

20 “(2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—The
21 amounts authorized to be appropriated by paragraph
22 (1) shall supplement and not supplant other
23 amounts available to the Administrator.”.

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 4 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) 3 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 with the Missouri River.

23 (ii) A Middle Mississippi River Re-
24 search Center located in the region
25 downriver from the confluence of the Mis-

1 souri River to the confluence of the Ohio
2 River.

3 (iii) A Lower Mississippi River Re-
4 search Center located in the region
5 downriver from the confluence of the Ohio
6 River to the Gulf of Mexico.

7 (3) FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the research
8 centers established under this subsection shall be
9 to—

10 (A) conduct scientific research on the
11 MRRRI focus areas described in section
12 124(c)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Con-
13 trol Act (as added by this Act);

14 (B) consult with and advise relevant Fed-
15 eral agencies on—

16 (i) the improvement of programs that
17 monitor water quality in the Mississippi
18 River Corridor and the health of the river
19 habitat or the establishment of such pro-
20 grams, where necessary;

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

23 (iii) any additional goals, priorities,
24 metrics, and research objectives proposed

1 as part of the science plan described in
2 subsection (b)(2); and

3 (C) consult, and to the extent practicable,
4 collaborate with relevant Federal agencies and
5 non-Federal stakeholders regarding research,
6 monitoring, and other efforts to promote the
7 restoration and resiliency of the Mississippi
8 River Corridor.

9 (4) INTEGRATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL AC-
10 TIVITIES.—The Secretary of the Interior shall en-
11 sure that research and other activities carried out
12 under this subsection are carried out in coordination
13 with other Federal research and monitoring activi-
14 ties related to efforts to promote the restoration and
15 resiliency of the Mississippi River Corridor.

16 (b) SCIENCE PLAN.—

17 (1) MISSISSIPPI RIVER SCIENCE FORUM.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year
19 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Di-
20 rector of the United States Geological Survey
21 shall host a Mississippi River science forum
22 with relevant Federal agencies, Mississippi
23 River States, Tribal governments, Tribal orga-
24 nizations, academia, and other non-Federal
25 stakeholders to—

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

5 (ii) determine the resources that are
6 necessary to—

7 (I) address any data gaps and
8 areas of concern identified under
9 clause (i); and

10 (II) develop an integrated science
11 plan under paragraph (2).

12 (B) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days
13 after the Director of the United States Geologi-
14 cal Survey hosts the Mississippi River science
15 forum under subparagraph (A), the Director
16 shall submit a report on the findings from such
17 forum to—

18 (i) the Administrator of the Environ-
19 mental Protection Agency;

20 (ii) the MRRRI Director;

21 (iii) the Committee on Appropriations
22 and the Committee on Natural Resources
23 and the Committee on Transportation and
24 Infrastructure of the House of Representa-
25 tives; and

1 (iv) the Committee on Appropriations
2 and the Committee on Energy and Natural
3 Resources of the Senate.

4 (2) SCIENCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
6 after the conclusion of the Mississippi River
7 science forum required by paragraph (1), the
8 Director of the United States Geological Survey
9 shall develop a science plan that establishes pri-
10 orities, metrics, and research proposals for the
11 MRRRI.

12 (B) SUBMISSION.—Upon completion of the
13 science plan developed under this paragraph,
14 the Director of the United States Geological
15 Survey shall make such plan available on a pub-
16 lic website and submit such plan to the MRRRI
17 Director to inform the implementation of the
18 actionable goals and action plans developed for
19 the MRRRI under section 124(d) of the Fed-
20 eral Water Pollution Control Act (as added by
21 this Act).

22 (C) UPDATES.—Not less than once every 5
23 years, the Director of the United States Geo-
24 logical Survey shall coordinate with the MRRRI
25 Director and the research centers established

1 under subsection (a) to review and update the
2 science plan developed under this subsection.

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”, “river habitat”, “Trib-
7 al government”, and “Tribal organization” have the
8 meaning given such terms in section 124(a) of the Federal
9 Water Pollution Control Act, as added by this Act.

○