



## Support Improving Inland Waterway Infrastructure New 1200-Foot Locks

### **GROWMARK Position:**

GROWMARK, Inc. supports an increase in the Inland Waterways User Fee of 6 to 9 cents per gallon, (from the current 20 cents to 26 cents), to construct new 1200- foot locks on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

### **Background:**

Waterway users have been working on reforming waterway project management and improving existing 600-foot locks to modern 1200-foot locks for too long. Waterways serve a vital transportation role to the U.S. economy and world economies dependent on U.S. exports. This role was emphasized during the low water period on the Mississippi River in the fall of 2013. Waterway shipments almost came to a halt that would have resulted in billions of dollars of lost economic opportunity.

Passing the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), was a great step toward the goal of constructing new 1200-foot locks. Increasing the funds for waterway infrastructure improvements should be the next step. The waterway industry has agreed to increase its share of funding waterway infrastructure improvements so we can reach the goal of constructing new 1200-foot locks quicker.

Approximately 60% of the grain exported from the U.S. goes through the Gulf of Mexico. The waterway system in the Midwest can be considered a vital port in need of improvement to keep pace with world competition. Our nation has a goal to increase exports of U.S. made products, enhance job growth, and help feed a growing world population. Improving our waterways by constructing new 1200-foot locks will be a major step in the right direction towards achieving this worthwhile objective.

May 2014