

[~117H4202]

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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

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

Ms. McCOLLUM introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

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 and
7 ensuring the integration of the MRRRI with other
8 Federal, State, Tribal, and local programs;

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

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

16 (6) establishing the Mississippi River Corridor
17 Research Centers.

18 **SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE**
19 **INITIATIVE.**

20 Title I of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
21 (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
22 the following:

23 **“SEC. 127. MISSISSIPPI RIVER.**

24 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

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

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

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

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

17 “(6) MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE.—The term
18 ‘Mississippi River State’ means Arkansas, Illinois,
19 Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi,
20 Missouri, Tennessee, or Wisconsin.

21 “(7) TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘Tribal
22 government’ means the recognized governing body of
23 an any Indian tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village,
24 community, component band, or component reserva-
25 tion, individually identified (including parentheti-

1 cally) in the list published pursuant to section 104
2 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of
3 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

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

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

12 “(10) ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMU-
13 NITY.—The term ‘economically disadvantaged com-
14 munity’ means any census block group in which 30
15 percent or more of the population are individuals
16 with an annual household income equal to, or less
17 than, the greater of—

18 “(A) an amount equal to 80 percent of the
19 median income of the area in which the house-
20 hold is located, as reported by the Department
21 of Housing and Urban Development; and

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

24 “(11) COMMUNITY OF COLOR.—The term ‘com-
25 munity of color’ means a geographically distinct area

1 in which the population of any of the following cat-
2 egories of individuals is higher than the average pop-
3 ulation of such category for the State in which the
4 geographically distinct area is located:

5 “(A) Black.

6 “(B) African American.

7 “(C) Asian.

8 “(D) Pacific Islander.

9 “(E) Hispanic.

10 “(F) Latino.

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

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

17 “(A) The Department of Agriculture—

18 “(i) the Natural Resources Conserva-
19 tion Service; and

20 “(ii) the Forest Service.

21 “(B) The Department of the Interior, in-
22 cluding—

23 “(i) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

24 “(ii) the United States Fish and Wild-
25 life Service;

1 “(iii) the United States Geological
2 Survey; and

3 “(iv) the National Park Service.

4 “(C) The Corps of Engineers.

5 “(D) The Federal Emergency Management
6 Agency.

7 “(E) The National Oceanic and Atmos-
8 pheric Administration.

9 “(F) The Coast Guard.

10 “(G) Any other Federal agency the
11 MRRRI Director determines is relevant.

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

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

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

20 “(3) DIRECTOR.—The Program Office shall be
21 headed by a Director, appointed by the Adminis-
22 trator, who has management experience and tech-
23 nical expertise relating to the Mississippi River and
24 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 MRRRI Director
4 shall—

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

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

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

19 “(D) facilitate engagement and consulta-
20 tion with Tribal governments and Tribal organi-
21 zations to ensure Tribal needs and priorities are
22 solicited early and throughout the development
23 of the actionable goals and action plan required
24 by this section;

1 “(E) work cooperatively with the Bureau
2 of Indian Affairs and other Federal agencies to
3 carry out subparagraph (D); and

4 “(F) submit to Congress, and make avail-
5 able on a public website, an annual report de-
6 scribing—

7 “(i) progress made in implementing
8 the MRRRI;

9 “(ii) the coordination of the MRRRI
10 with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local
11 programs;

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

14 “(iv) any grants awarded under this
15 section; and

16 “(v) specific projects and activities
17 carried out pursuant to this section.

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

22 “(6) TRIBAL LIAISON.—The MRRRI Director
23 shall appoint a Tribal Liaison within the Program
24 Office to ensure enhanced interagency technical sup-
25 port, communication, and coordination with Tribal

1 governments, Tribal organizations, and Tribal stake-
2 holders, and to carry out other duties as determined
3 necessary to meet the needs of Tribes.

4 “(c) MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION AND RESIL-
5 IENCE INITIATIVE.—

6 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established
7 within the Agency the Mississippi River Restoration
8 and Resilience Initiative to implement projects for
9 systemic, large-scale restoration of the Mississippi
10 River Corridor.

11 “(2) FOCUS AREAS.—Any project or activity
12 carried out under this section shall address at least
13 1 of the following focus areas:

14 “(A) The improvement of water quality in
15 the Mississippi River Corridor and drinking
16 water quality in the Mississippi River States
17 by—

18 “(i) reducing the amount of polluted
19 runoff, excess agricultural nutrients, and
20 sediment in the Mississippi River Corridor;
21 and

22 “(ii) improving source water protec-
23 tions.

24 “(B) The improvement of community resil-
25 ience throughout the Mississippi River Corridor

1 by restoring the ability of the Mississippi River
2 floodplain, riverine wetlands, delta and coastal
3 wetlands, and backwaters to minimize and ame-
4 liorate flood and storm risks.

5 “(C) The protection and restoration of fish
6 and wildlife habitat in and along the Mississippi
7 River Corridor.

8 “(D) The prevention of the spread of
9 aquatic invasive species in the Mississippi River
10 Corridor.

11 “(E) The improvement of communication
12 and partnership activities related to the focus
13 areas described in subparagraphs (A) through
14 (D).

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

18 “(3) PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.—

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

24 “(B) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The MRRRI
25 Director, or the head of any other Federal

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

12 “(4) PROJECT SELECTION.—

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

19 “(i) the selection of an equitable dis-
20 tribution of projects and activities along
21 the entire Mississippi River Corridor;

22 “(ii) the ability of a project to achieve
23 strategic and measurable environmental
24 outcomes;

1 “(iii) the recognition that projects
2 may provide benefits to local or regional
3 communities or to the entire Mississippi
4 River Corridor;

5 “(iv) the feasibility of prompt imple-
6 mentation, timely achievement of measur-
7 able results, and resource leveraging; and

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

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

18 “(C) COMPATIBILITY.—The MRRRI Di-
19 rector shall ensure that projects and activities
20 carried out under this section are compatible
21 with—

22 “(i) the ability of the Corps of Engi-
23 neers to maintain navigation in the Mis-
24 sissippi River; and

1 “(ii) the structural integrity or effec-
2 tiveness of Federal, State, local, or Tribal
3 disaster risk reduction infrastructure.

4 “(5) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—

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

11 “(B) ACTIONS DESCRIBED.—The actions
12 referred to in subparagraph (A) are actions
13 that—

14 “(i) protect or restore naturally occur-
15 ring hydrologic, geomorphic, and ecological
16 functions and processes, including the res-
17 toration or rehabilitation of wetlands, in-
18 stream habitats (including through re-
19 connection of side channels and back-
20 waters), living shorelines, or upland habi-
21 tats;

22 “(ii) remove or modify structures , in-
23 cluding culverts, levees, and dams, to re-
24 store—

1 “(I) natural hydrology of rivers,
2 streams, floodplains, wetlands, or
3 coasts; or

4 “(II) the form, function, or proc-
5 esses of rivers, streams, floodplains,
6 wetlands, or coasts;

7 “(iii) permanently protect privately
8 owned lands through fee title acquisition or
9 enrollment into voluntary permanent wet-
10 land, flooding, or other conservation ease-
11 ments;

12 “(iv) facilitate habitat restoration
13 using responsibly sourced and clean
14 dredged sediment material by covering the
15 cost differential between the Federal
16 standard for dredge disposal and the cost
17 of transportation;

18 “(v) relocate, elevate, or demolish, and
19 clean up flood-prone structures, and carry
20 out any related floodplain restoration;

21 “(vi) increase water retention and in-
22 filtration through actions that promote a
23 healthy soil ecosystem, including maxi-
24 mizing soil cover, maximizing soil biodiver-

1 sity, and maximizing the presence of living
2 roots;

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

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

19 “(ix) facilitate the cleanup of legacy
20 contaminants that are not hazardous sub-
21 stances (as defined in section 101 of the
22 Comprehensive Environmental Response,
23 Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980
24 (42 U.S.C. 9601)) or designated as haz-
25 ardous substances pursuant to section 102

1 of the Comprehensive Environmental Re-
2 sponse, Compensation, and Liability Act of
3 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9602);

4 “(x) control, manage, or eradicate
5 nonnative aquatic invasive species or re-
6 introduce native aquatic species, including
7 through—

8 “(I) investments in technology
9 and research to combat the spread of
10 aquatic invasive species;

11 “(II) the use of in-river physical
12 deterrent or controls; or

13 “(III) the promotion of commer-
14 cial harvesting of nonnative aquatic
15 species;

16 “(xi) address the disproportionate ef-
17 fects of the ecological degradation of the
18 Mississippi River Corridor on economically
19 disadvantaged communities in rural and
20 urban areas and on communities of color,
21 including through—

22 “(I) community based
23 participatory research;

24 “(II) project or community-wide
25 planning;

1 “(III) outreach and community
2 engagement; or

3 “(IV) restoration-related job
4 training and workforce development;
5 or

6 “(xii) additional actions determined to
7 be eligible pursuant to subsection
8 (d)(2)(B)(v).

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

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

22 “(A) describes criteria for ecological suc-
23 cess by which the project will be evaluated
24 based on replacement of lost functions and val-
25 ues of the Mississippi River Corridor habitat,

1 including hydrologic and vegetative characteris-
2 tics;

3 “(B) identifies an entity responsible for
4 such monitoring; and

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

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

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

19 “(2) ACTION PLAN.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
21 after the date of enactment of this section, the
22 MRRRI Director shall develop an action plan to
23 make progress on the MRRRI through the im-
24 plementation of MRRRI projects and activities
25 under subsection (c).

1 “(B) CONTENTS.—The MRRRI Director
2 shall include in the action plan developed under
3 subparagraph (A)—

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

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

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

20 “(iv) a plan to monitor the implemen-
21 tation of any recommendations developed
22 under this subparagraph; and

23 “(v) a description of any additional
24 actions the Director determines are eligible
25 under this section.

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

9 “(3) UPDATES.—

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

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

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

24 “(A) consult with Mississippi River States,
25 Tribal governments within such States, the Sec-

1 retary of the Interior, the Chief of Engineers,
2 and the Secretary of Agriculture;

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

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

12 “(e) FUNDING.—

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

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

21 “(B) transfer funds to other Federal pro-
22 grams to be used for achieving specifically tar-
23 geted and measurable environmental outcomes
24 that advance the actionable goals developed and
25 updated under subsection (d); and

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

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

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

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

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

25 “(4) COST SHARE.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
2 subparagraph (B), the Federal share of the cost
3 of a project or activity carried out by a non-
4 Federal entity under this section shall not ex-
5 ceed 80 percent of the total cost of the project
6 or activity.

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

15 “(C) IN KIND CONTRIBUTION.—The non-
16 Federal share of the cost of a project or activity
17 carried out under this section may include the
18 value of an in-kind contribution provided by a
19 non-Federal entity.

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

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

1 “(B) a State drinking water treatment re-
2 volving loan fund established under section
3 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42
4 U.S.C. 300j–12); or

5 “(C) the Water Infrastructure Finance and
6 Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3901 et
7 seq.).

8 “(6) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
9 this section may be construed to waive any require-
10 ment under any applicable Federal environmental
11 law, including—

12 “(A) this Act;

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

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

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

19 “(f) SET-ASIDE.—

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

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

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

7 “(2) ACTION PLAN.—

8 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the total amount
9 of funds made available to carry out the
10 MRRRI under this section for each fiscal year
11 beginning with the first fiscal year after which
12 the action plan required under subsection (d)(2)
13 is developed, not more than 5 percent may be
14 used for projects and activities that are eligible
15 under subsection (c)(5), but that do not address
16 an objective identified in the action plan under
17 subsection (d)(2)(B)(iii).

18 “(B) PRIORITY.—In using funds under
19 subparagraph (A), the MRRRI Director shall
20 prioritize projects that reduce the effects of nat-
21 ural disasters or respond to emerging threats
22 from natural disasters.

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

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The head of a relevant
25 Federal agency that is engaged in, or has authority

1 over, programs relating to research, monitoring, and
2 planning to maintain, enhance, preserve, or rehabili-
3 tate the environmental quality and natural resources
4 of the Mississippi River shall—

5 “(A) submit an annual report to the Ad-
6 ministrator describing the activities of the agen-
7 cy relating to the MRRRI;

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

10 “(C) ensure that any funding provided
11 through the MRRRI supplements, and does not
12 supplant, funding obtained through other agen-
13 cy budgets or other sources of funds for activi-
14 ties related to the Mississippi River; and

15 “(D) strive to maintain, and where possible
16 increase, the base level of funding for activities
17 of such agency related to the Mississippi River,
18 without regard to funding under the MRRRI.

19 “(h) BUDGET ITEM.—

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

24 “(2) INCLUSION.—The budget justification for
25 the budget line item described in paragraph (1) shall

1 include the amount to support the operation and ac-
2 tivities of the Program Office.”.

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

5 (a) MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR RESEARCH CEN-
6 TERS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Inte-
8 rior shall coordinate with the MRRRI Director to es-
9 tablish a network of 4 Mississippi River Corridor
10 Research Centers within the United States Geologi-
11 cal Survey.

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

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

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

21 (i) An Upper Mississippi River Re-
22 search Center located in the region from
23 the headwaters of the Mississippi River to
24 the confluence with the Missouri River.

1 (ii) A Middle Mississippi River Re-
2 search Center located in the region
3 downriver from the confluence of the Mis-
4 souri River to the confluence of the Ohio
5 River.

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

10 (3) FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the research
11 centers established under this subsection shall be
12 to—

13 (A) conduct scientific research on the
14 MRRRI focus areas described in section
15 127(c)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Con-
16 trol Act (as added by this Act);

17 (B) consult with and advise relevant Fed-
18 eral agencies on—

19 (i) the improvement of programs that
20 monitor water quality in the Mississippi
21 River Corridor and the health of the Mis-
22 sissippi River Corridor habitat or the es-
23 tablishment of such programs, where nec-
24 essary;

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

3 (iii) any additional goals, priorities,
4 metrics, and research objectives proposed
5 as part of the science plan described in
6 subsection (b)(2); and

7 (C) consult, and to the extent practicable,
8 collaborate with relevant Federal agencies and
9 non-Federal entities regarding research, moni-
10 toring, and other efforts to promote the restora-
11 tion and resiliency of the Mississippi River Cor-
12 ridor.

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

20 (b) SCIENCE PLAN.—

21 (1) MISSISSIPPI RIVER SCIENCE FORUM.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year
23 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Di-
24 rector of the United States Geological Survey
25 shall host a Mississippi River science forum

1 with relevant Federal agencies, Mississippi
2 River States, Tribal governments, Tribal orga-
3 nizations, academia, and other non-Federal en-
4 tities to—

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

9 (ii) determine the resources that are
10 necessary to—

11 (I) address any data gaps and
12 areas of concern identified under
13 clause (i); and

14 (II) develop an integrated science
15 plan under paragraph (2).

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

22 (i) the Administrator of the Environ-
23 mental Protection Agency;

24 (ii) the MRRRI Director;

1 (iii) the Committee on Appropriations
2 and the Committee on Natural Resources
3 and the Committee on Transportation and
4 Infrastructure of the House of Representa-
5 tives; and

6 (iv) the Committee on Appropriations
7 and the Committee on Energy and Natural
8 Resources of the Senate.

9 (2) SCIENCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT.—

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

17 (B) SUBMISSION.—Upon completion of the
18 science plan developed under this paragraph,
19 the Director of the United States Geological
20 Survey shall make such plan available on a pub-
21 lic website and submit such plan to the MRRRI
22 Director to inform the implementation of the
23 actionable goals and action plans developed for
24 the MRRRI under section 127(d) of the Fed-

1 eral Water Pollution Control Act (as added by
2 this Act).

3 (C) UPDATES.—Not less than once every 5
4 years, the Director of the United States Geo-
5 logical Survey shall coordinate with the MRRRI
6 Director and the research centers established
7 under subsection (a) to review and update the
8 science plan developed under this subsection.

9 (D) COORDINATION.—In developing and
10 updating the science plan, the Director shall so-
11 licit input and comment from the public
12 through a formal public notice and comment
13 period.

14 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

15 In this Act, the terms “MRRRI”, “MRRRI Direc-
16 tor”, “Mississippi River Corridor”, “Mississippi River
17 State”, “relevant Federal agency”, “Tribal government”,
18 and “Tribal organization” have the meanings given such
19 terms in section 127(a) of the Federal Water Pollution
20 Control Act, as added by this Act.