

To the office of U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin

Re: S 5151 (119th Congress), MRRRI Act • Latest action (2026-07-28): Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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Office of record (Congress.gov): 141 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510, Washington, DC • (202) 224-5653

Mississippi River Corridor Restoration and Resilience Grant Program Act

The measure, as described from the official record: To restore and protect the Mississippi River Corridor ecosystem, improve water quality, enhance flood resilience, and support fish and wildlife habitat through federal projects and initiatives.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act establishes the Mississippi River Corridor Restoration and Resilience Grant Program. The purpose is to provide federal financial assistance to states and Indian tribes within the Mississippi River Corridor for projects that restore water quality, enhance flood resilience, and improve fish and wildlife habitat, where such projects have a direct and substantial effect on interstate commerce, including navigation, flood control, and water supply for downstream states.

Eligible projects include wetland restoration, agricultural best management practices to reduce nutrient runoff, levee setbacks, and reconnection of floodplains. To receive a grant, a state or tribe must submit a plan that demonstrates the project's interstate commerce nexus and must provide a 25% non-federal match. No grant may be used to acquire land by eminent domain or to impose new federal regulations on private land use.

The program is administered jointly by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Chief of Engineers of the Army Corps of Engineers. They shall establish a Mississippi River Corridor Task Force with representatives from each eligible state and tribe to prioritize projects.

Funding is authorized at \$200 million per year for fiscal years 2026 through 2030, to be appropriated from the general fund. This amount is offset by reducing premium subsidies for federal crop insurance on lands within the 100-year floodplain of the Mississippi River by 5% over the same period.

The program sunsets on September 30, 2030. The Government Accountability Office shall submit a report to Congress on the program's effectiveness and interstate commerce benefits by June 30, 2029.

Enforcement: If a grant recipient fails to comply with the terms of the grant agreement, the

Administrator may withhold further payments and require repayment of funds used for non-compliant activities, after notice and opportunity for hearing.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	General fund appropriation offset by reduction in federal crop insurance premium subsidies for floodplain lands within the Mississippi River 100-year floodplain.
Funding Amount	\$200 million per year for 5 years (total \$1 billion)
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers, with a Mississippi River Corridor Task Force including state and tribal representatives.
Enforcement Mechanism	Withholding of future grant payments and repayment of misused funds after notice and opportunity for hearing.
Effective Date	October 1, 2025

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (Commerce Clause)
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (Spending Clause)
- Tenth Amendment

Concerns with the measure as written:

- The original bill may regulate land use and water quality beyond federal authority under the Commerce Clause, potentially infringing on state police powers and the Tenth Amendment.
 - It could impose unfunded mandates on states without clear nexus to interstate commerce or federal property.
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WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Democrats: achieves environmental restoration and climate resilience goals with dedicated federal funding and interstate coordination. Republicans: respects state sovereignty through voluntary participation, a 25% matching requirement, a 5-year sunset, and an offset that reduces federal spending on crop insurance in flood-prone areas.

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