

**Proposed Establishment of a Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois  
Port Statistical Area  
Letter of Intent  
Submitted to United States Army Corps of Engineers (COE) – Rock Island District**

**Purpose/Goal of the Request.**

Create a Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI) Port Statistical Area that is federally recognized by the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center (WCSC), which will collect, manage, compile, and report data for the MRPEIWI and demonstrate it is a port which moves tonnages ranked in the top 100 in the United States. Further, this designation would facilitate marketing the transportation capabilities of the MRPEIWI to enable full utilization, ensure reliable access to the region's exports, and promote environmentally sustainable water infrastructure maintenance and development.

**Description of the Effort and Geographical Area.**

The Bi-State Regional Commission (BSRC) is acting as the coordinating organization and lead in behalf of the participating partner organizations, governments, and industries to submit an official application to the WCSC of the US Army Corps of Engineers requesting designation as a Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois Port Statistical Area.

The proposed MRPEIWI consists of existing ports and terminals along the Mississippi River between Iowa and Illinois from river mile 361.5 in Keokuk, Iowa to river mile 580 in Dubuque, Iowa. There are seven counties in Illinois (Hancock, Henderson, Mercer, Rock Island, Whiteside, Carroll, and Jo Daviess) and eight counties in Iowa (Lee, Des Moines, Louisa, Muscatine, Scott, Clinton, Jackson, and Dubuque) adjacent to the river along this corridor (see enclosed map). MRPEIWI would encompass 50 existing Iowa barge terminals, and about 20 existing barge terminals in Illinois (see enclosed list of terminals). Based on data from *Iowa in Motion, 2012 State Transportation Plan* (see the link to the study at the end of the letter), over 6.2 million tons and \$5.2 billion in commodities were shipped on waterways to, from and within Iowa at that time. The volume is comparable to the Port of Wilmington, Delaware which would rank the proposed MRPEIWI, at a minimum, 68th in the nation and the addition of tonnages from Illinois terminals would improve this ranking. (Note the Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT) is currently developing the *Illinois Marine Transportation System Plan* which will refine estimated tonnages moved along all waterways in the State including those in the proposed MRPEIWI.)

The Ports of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky model which involved collective ports and terminals associating to raise greater awareness within the shipping industry, promote river commerce and support maritime infrastructure improvements is being mirrored by this effort.

**Tentative Schedule.**

- MRPEIWI Letter of Intent (LOI) submitted to Rock Island District COE – October 2019
- Counties, states, regional planning organization briefed on the concept – Ongoing
- Feedback received from COE regarding LOI and next steps – November 2019
- Counties, states, regional planning agencies provide concurrence documentation – December 2019
- Interim advisory committee created to draft governance structure and application – January 2020
- MRPEIWI port packet submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Approval – September 2020
- MRPEIWI becomes federally recognized COE/USACE as a Port Statistical Area – September 2021
- WCSC collects/manages/compiles/reports statistical data for MRPEIWI per application – September 2022

**Description of Supporting Resources.**

The Bi-State Regional Commission will coordinate this effort and act as the applicant in partnership with East Central Intergovernmental Association based in Dubuque, Iowa; Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission based in Burlington, Iowa; Western Illinois Regional Council based in Macomb, Illinois; and Blackhawk Hills Regional Council based in Rock Falls, Illinois. All of these organization are regional planning agencies and have full ArcGIS and planning capabilities as well multi-disciplinary boards serving the entire proposed MRPEIWI. In addition they have existing relationships with all of the 15 counties in the MRPEIWI.

It is recognized that partnerships and collaboration with the various divisions of the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Coast Guard, along with the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation, waterborne associations and industry, agricultural associations and industry, military installations within the proposed port statistical area, local governments, and economic development organizations are key to the success of this effort. A demonstration of support from these entities will be provided in the official application as well as required supporting documentation from the participating counties and the States of Iowa and Illinois. General letters of support for this initial Letter of Intent are attached.

**Request.**

We request provisional approval status of the proposed MRPEIWI Port Statistical Area beginning the date of this LOI, for a 12-month period while the requirements of the port statistical area application are fully met by the Applicant, and formally reviewed and validated by the USACE. We also request that the first full year for the provisional MRPEIWI Port Statistical Area data being collected, compiled and reported be 2019. We understand that this basic data and information is already being collected by the WCSC and is available.

[https://iowadot.gov/systems\\_planning/Planning/Waterway](https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Planning/Waterway)

# Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI)

-  Counties in MRPEIWI area
-  Port Facility
-  Major Cities
-  Lock & Dam

**DISTANCE**  
150 Miles (Straight Line)  
190 Miles (Road)  
221.5 Miles (River)

*NOTE: In 2012, over 6.2 million tons and \$5.2 billion worth of commodities were shipped on the waterways to, from, and within Iowa. This included 1.25 million tons and \$2.9 billion moving to Iowa; 4.5 million tons and \$2.1 billion moving from Iowa; and 484,000 tons and \$173.3 million moving within Iowa. (<https://iowadot.gov/about/waterways>).*

**RIVER COUNTIES**  
7 in Illinois  
8 in Iowa

Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided are derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Bi-State Regional Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.

