

Woodbury County Board of Supervisors

Courthouse • Room 104
620 Douglas Street • Sioux City, Iowa 51101
Telephone (712) 279-6525 • Fax (712) 279-6577

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November 12, 2024

Captain Andrew R. Bender
Commander of Sector
Upper Mississippi River

Dear Captain Bender,

We write today to express our extreme concern over your decision to remove 36 Aids to Navigation (ATONs) on the Missouri River above Blencoe, Iowa. Additionally, we request this decision be revoked based upon ongoing investments in the waterway and the economic potential that the Missouri River above Blencoe provides for our region.

As you know, navigation of our nation's waterways is the foundation of our economy and is one of the key contributors to how the United States became the world's largest economy. Since our founding, the ability to move resources, people, and goods along our rivers has been a vital component in our growth and the Missouri River is no exception. Throughout the last century, the Missouri River has become an instrumental part of our midwestern economy.

If we look towards the future, the Missouri River above Blencoe has seen continued investment in recent years and our local businesses have several planned projects to utilize the river more effectively and increase the amount of vessel traffic transiting the waterway. By removing the ATONs above Blencoe, our businesses will be hindered, several industries that our community relies upon will be stifled, and investment in the area will decrease significantly.

A project completed in 2016 constructed the new CF Industries granulated urea fertilizer production plant. This \$2.4 billion project relied heavily on river access to bring large reactor units to the new plant site. During construction, over 12,000,000 pounds of plant components, items too large to haul by rail or highway, with a value of over \$200,000,000 were shipped by river to the site on 8 barges. In 2017, during a refit of their smaller fertilizer plant, a component weighing over 1,195,000 pounds worth over \$5.7 million was hauled by river on a single barge. Another new component is scheduled for delivery to the plant in 2025.

While river traffic north of Blencoe may not be high volume, on a value per pound basis, river transport of heavy components is vital to industries that have located near the river. River navigation remains important to industry within the boundaries of Woodbury County.

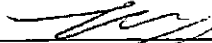
We believe that removing the 36 ATONs would be harmful to our local economy and shut off any potential investments in the future. Businesses that are investing or would look to invest will be dissuaded by this decision. We believe that the Missouri River above Blencoe has vast potential and will be an economic boon in the future. We wanted to outline some recent investments and outlooks that should increase vessel traffic above Blencoe:

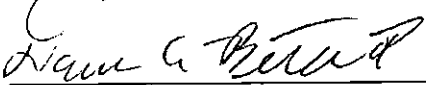
- Barge Terminal Project in Sioux City that could bring barge traffic as soon as summer 2025. This will bolster the already robust manufacturing sector in the area. More information can be found in the supplemental documents.
- Over \$469 million is currently being invested from disaster funding and other legislation into the Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project on the Missouri River.

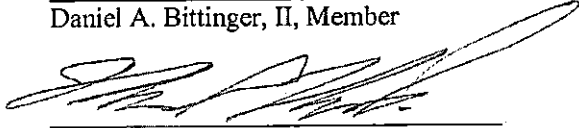
We respectfully request that this decision be revoked and the 36 ATONs remain on the Missouri River above Blencoe.


Sincerely,

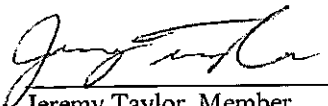
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