**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**
**Bureau of Water, Permit Section**
**(IEPA)**

2520 West Iles, Post Office Box 19276, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276, 217/782-3362

The IEPA has issued a Public Notice of a request for a Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification that would allow the issuance of a federal permit for the discharge of pollutants to waters of the State.

**Public Notice Beginning Date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026

**Public Notice Ending Date:** Wednesday, March 25, 2026

**Agency Log No.: C-0004-26**

**Federal Permit Information**: This civil works project is under the jurisdiction of St. Louis District, Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**Name and Address of Discharger:** United States Army Corps of Engineers, Travis J. Schepker - 100 Arsenal Street, Saint Louis, MO 63118

**Discharge Location:** In Statewide/Regional in Lincoln County. Additional project location information includes the following: Sandy Slough Road, Winfield, IL 63389

**Name of Receiving Water:** Mississippi River

**Project Name/Description:** Phase III Construction: Lock and Dam 25, 1200 Foot Lock Extension - proposed addition of a new 1200-foot lock chamber to the existing Lock and Dam 25 project

**Construction Schedule:** Immediate (Planned project duration is approximately 199 days)

The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters must provide their name and address along with comments on the certification request. The IEPA Log number must appear on each comment page. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. Only hearing requests and comments that pertain to Clean Water Act Section 401 authority will be considered. This authority provides consideration of whether the permit or license would be consistent with Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, or 307 of the CWA, as well as "any other appropriate requirement of State [or tribal] law". Requests for additional comment period must provide a demonstration of need. The final day of comment acceptance will be on the Public Notice Ending date shown above, unless the IEPA grants an extended notice period. The attached Fact Sheet provides a detailed description of the project and the findings of the IEPA's antidegradation assessment.

If written comments or requests indicate a significant degree of public interest in the certification application, the IEPA may, at its discretion, hold a public hearing. Public notice will be given 30 days before any public hearing. If a Section 401 water quality certification is issued, response to relevant comments will be provided at the time of the certification. For further information, please see the contact information below.

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Post Document. No. C-0004-26-03112026-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

401 Water Quality Certification Fact Sheet for LD 25 Phase III 1200' Lock Extension

IEPA Log No. C-0004-26

Contact: Angie Sutton 217-782-9864

The USACE has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with the addition of a new 1200-foot lock chamber to the lock at Lock and Dam 25 on the Mississippi River to eliminate double lockages, ease congestion, reduce delays, and increase safety. The proposed project area is located in Township 12 South, Range 2 West, Section 19, Calhoun County, Illinois. The Project Area is at River Mile 241 of the Mississippi River. Although the new lock chamber, guard walls, and guard cell will be constructed within the state of Missouri, the applicant plans to discharge approximately 116,500 cubic yards (CY) of dredged sand along the Missouri and Illinois state lines. Dredged material would be split between Missouri and Illinois and be placed in disposal areas previously approved for navigation channel maintenance.

Three features will make up the Phase III construction and include a new 1200-foot lock chamber, downstream guard wall, and upstream guard wall. Approximately 25,000 CY of poorly graded sand will require removal from the guard wall footprint prior to the downstream guard wall construction. The upstream guard wall construction will require removal of approximately 86,000 CY of poorly graded sand and 5500 CY of silt from the guard wall footprint. The dredged material will be placed in an open water placement site previously approved for maintenance dredging of the navigation channel. Dredging will be completed by using a hydraulic dredge unless operations are confined by impediments, in which case mechanical excavation would be used. No mitigation will be required for dredging on the Illinois side.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated August 2024, September 12, 2024, November 2024, and January 6, 2026.

**Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body**

At the project site, the Mississippi River has 17,120 cfs of flow upstream of the outfall during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. The Mississippi River is classified as General Use Waters. The Mississippi River is not listed as a biologically significant stream in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Publication *Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System*, nor is it given an integrity rating in that document. The Mississippi River, Waterbody Segment IL_K-21, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption with potential causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, and primary contact use with a potential cause given as fecal coliform. Aesthetic quality and aquatic life uses are fully supported. The Mississippi River is not subject to enhanced dissolved oxygen standards. No wetlands were identified or proposed to be impacted on the Illinois side of the project.

**Identification of Proposed Pollutant Load Increases or Potential Impacts on Uses**
Dredging will occur in an area typically dredged for navigation maintenance. However, the amount proposed for the project is significantly lower than these maintenance dredging events. Approximately 25,000 CY of poorly graded sand will require removal from the guard wall footprint prior to the downstream guard wall construction. The upstream guard wall construction will require removal of approximately 86,000 CY of poorly graded sand and 5500 CY of silt from the guard wall footprint. Dredged material will be placed in an open water placement site previously approved for maintenance dredging of the navigation channel. The disposal area substrate will remain unchanged after dredging is completed. Benthic fauna will be destroyed or displaced; however, recolonization will occur once dredging activities are completed.

The pollutant load increases that would occur from this project include some possible local increases in total suspended solids. These increases are a normal and unavoidable result of construction and grading that may occur in the waterway and in and around the area of construction.

The fine content observed in all samples collected from the Concrete Apron Sill dredge cut indicates that fine material will exceed 20%. Sediments were further evaluated using a Teir II Sediment Evaluation. Samples were collected in 2021 and 2025. Results of the bulk sediment sampling showed that Mercury was not detected in the 2025 samples and was below Probable Effect Concentration (PEC) and Threshold Effect Concentration (TEC). Lead and Zinc were also found to be below both PEC and TEC. Pesticides were not detected in 2025 sampling and were not tested for in 2021, and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) were not detected in 2021 or 2025 samples.

Elutriate testing was performed for Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Ammonia, and Metals. Pesticides and PCBs were not detected in any samples. Zinc, Lead and Mercury results were all below the acute and chronic standards at the <1 hr, 1 hr, and 4 hr intervals. Ammonia levels for all sampling events at all testing intervals were above the acute water quality standard with the exception of two of the 2021 sampling events at the 1- and 4-hour mark. All samples were above the chronic water quality sample. Based on the Cormix models, sediment will be placed in the Secondary Placement Site as dilution would be inefficient in the Preferred Placement Site due to minimal depth and flow. Cormix modeling shows that chronic and acute ammonia water quality standards would be met within a short distance of the disposal location. Even though there is no numeric criterion for Total Suspended Solids, modeling performed for this evaluation indicates that dilution would be rapid near complete at 50% below the discharge.

**Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading**
Impacts would be localized and minimized through the use of best management practices and adherence to regulations governing stormwater runoff at construction sites.

USACE is proposing to utilize best management practices to minimize impacts that include minimization of fill material movement, suspended particulates, and turbidity level effects.

Mechanical dredging tends to be the more conservative approach with respect to impacting water quality. This method would be the more efficient method for dredging as operations become confined by existing lock walls, and other impediments such as large woody debris, cables/rope, and historically placed riprap are encountered. Material would be loaded onto a flattop barge where it would then be transported to the disposal site and offloaded with a front loader or skid steer.

Dredging would be completed outside of spawning season which is typically defined as 15 March – 15 June. The applicant states that a larger dredge may be used. Slurry rates can be reduced to reduce ammonia levels if necessary.

Hydraulic dredging could be utilized, and completion could occur in a shorter timeframe than mechanical depending on the slurry rate. If necessary, dredging could be temporarily ceased to allow for rebounding of conditions.

Water quality monitoring would be performed at the project site during dredging. If water quality standards were not being met, dredge rates would be reduced by either reducing effluent velocity, altering the sediment to water ratio, and/or temporarily shutting down operations so the plume can dissipate. Additional BMPs that may be utilized to ensure water quality criteria are met may include introducing a flocculant to the discharge or switching to mechanical excavation. Additionally, dredged material will be spread out across the disposal area to prevent mounding.

Impacts would be localized and minimized through the use of best management practices and adherence to regulations governing stormwater runoff at construction sites. Additional site-specific information of effects on particulates and turbidity, chemical and physical properties of the water column, effects to biota, and actions taken to minimize impacts are described in the Environmental Assessment submitted as part of the application documents.

**Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity**

Construction of the 1200 ft lock chamber at LD25 was authorized by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2007, Title VIII - Upper Mississippi and Illinois Water-Way System, Section 8003 – Authorization of Construction of Navigation Improvements. The new lock chamber will increase navigation efficiency and safety by reducing lockage times and accommodating larger tows. The proposed project will eliminate double lockages, ease congestion, reduce delays, and increase safety.

**Assessments of Alternatives for Less Increase in Loading or Minimal Environmental Degradation**

The applicant considered three alternatives for the proposed project. A No Action Alternative was not selected as it does not meet the authorized objectives cited in the WRDA. A Downstream Lock Chamber Alternative involves construction of a new 1200-foot lock adjacent to the 600-foot lock, and Upstream Lock Chamber Alternative involves construction of a new 1200-foot lock above LD 25. The Downstream Lock Chamber Alternative was chosen as the Preferred Alternative as it had fewer impacts on resources and lower costs.

There are no practical and feasible alternatives to the proposed placement of fill material that would meet the objectives of the project. The proposed project is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. Placement sites were compared during Cormix studies and determined that the Preferred Placement Site could not be utilized due to low depth and flow.

**Summary Comments of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Regional Planning Commissions, Zoning Boards or Other Entities.**

No state listed mussel species were found during the 2024 sampling effort that occurred above and below LD 25. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources did not provide comments on the EA during the public notice period.

An IPaC species list (Project code 202-0039585) was generated on June 17, 2024. The list included 7 threatened, endangered, or candidate species that included both the Missouri and Illinois sides of the project. Since the only Illinois impacts are a result of instream dredge placement, this portion of the review will discuss only mussel species.

The endangered Spectaclecase *(Cumberlandia monodonta)* was included in the IPaC list. However, no critical habitats were located within the project area. Per the USFWS comments on the draft supplemental EA, the Department concurred with the USACE Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI was approved by USACE on November 22, 2024. The comment states: "The spectaclecase mussel was not observed during surveys of the project area in 1997 and 2007 and is not known from any mussel beds near the project area. An additional survey of the project area was completed this year, and the results are pending. Based on the information in the EA, we concur that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the spectaclecase mussel. If results of the recent mussel survey indicate presence of the spectaclecase mussel then additional coordination or consultation would be necessary. We also concur that the proposed project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the monarch butterfly. Should this project be modified, or new information indicate listed or proposed species may be affected, consultation or additional coordination with this office, as appropriate, should be initiated."

**Agency Conclusion**

This preliminary assessment was conducted pursuant to the Illinois Pollution Control Board regulation for Antidegradation found at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.105 (antidegradation standard) and was based on the information available to the Agency at the time this assessment was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity would result in the attainment of water quality standards; that all technically and economically reasonable measures to avoid or minimize the extent of the proposed increase in pollutant loading have been incorporated into the proposed activity; and that this activity would benefit the waterway by eliminating double lockages, easing congestion, reducing delays, and increasing safety. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.