



**RESOLUTION  
of the  
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL  
regarding the  
AUTHORIZED PURPOSE OF THE  
MISSOURI RIVER MAINSTEM RESERVOIR SYSTEM  
Bismarck, North Dakota  
July 15, 2016**

**WHEREAS**, in the past, legislation has been introduced that would remove “fish and wildlife” as an authorized purpose for which the Corps can manage the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System (the “System”); and

**WHEREAS**, the System is the largest collectively managed group of reservoirs in the United States, consisting of six dams in four states that control runoff from approximately half of the Missouri River Basin; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the 1944 Flood Control Act, the Corps operates the System for eight authorized purposes: flood control, navigation, irrigation, power, water supply, water quality control, recreation, and fish and wildlife; and

**WHEREAS**, flood control, hydropower, and water supply have provided significant System benefits as originally expected, while navigation has fallen far short of its anticipated benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, the Act has not been reviewed since its passage in 1944, and there is now a question as to whether the System’s current operations best satisfy the Basin’s contemporary needs; and

**WHEREAS**, the System may be better served by a comprehensive, simultaneous, and transparent review of all eight authorized purposes to develop a plan for the sustainable future management of the System; and

**WHEREAS**, maintaining fish and wildlife as an authorized purpose is necessary for management actions that benefit recreationally important species, which prior studies have also shown support substantial economic activity; and

**WHEREAS**, the amount of commercial goods shipped on the Missouri River has decreased significantly since peak commercial tonnage in 1977; and

**WHEREAS**, the Corps is required to coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act, including the pallid sturgeon, interior least tern, and piping plover; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act requires the Corps to continue mitigating fish and wildlife habitat losses caused by the Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Western States Water Council urges the Congress to authorize and the Administration to complete a comprehensive study of the System’s authorized purposes and related benefits before addressing an appropriate balance and mix of uses.