



**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.