



January 7, 2021

Dear Friend of the Falls:

The Water Resources Development Act of 2020 has been signed into law. The legislation directs the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to convey land surrounding the Upper Lock at St. Anthony Falls to the City of Minneapolis or its designee. It also directs the USACE to maintain ownership of the Lock and its flood mitigation responsibility.

The passing of this federal legislation is a significant milestone for our project. Since the Lock was closed to commercial navigation in 2015, this key property on the Central Riverfront – steps from the entrance to the Stone Arch Bridge – has awaited a path forward.

Days prior to this milestone, the US Army Corps of Engineers [released an initial draft report](#) recommending “Complete Deauthorization and Disposal combined with offering a monetary incentive to the new owner in exchange for expediting the disposal through a direct property transfer” – or full disposition – of the Upper Lock.

Full disposition indicates the Corps seeks to abandon the Lock structure itself as well as their responsibility for flood risk management. ***It is also contrary to the new law.***

The Corps is [revising its draft report in light of the legislation](#), however it has stated that “WRDA 2020 does not change the Corps’ recommendation for complete disposal of the federal project...”. ***We know of no entity outside the Corps that is willing and able to fully acquire the Upper Lock and assume associated flood management responsibilities.***

A swift and strong public response is urgently needed to ensure the riverfront revitalization moves forward.

*Please express your support of “partial disposition” of the Upper St. Anthony Lock and Dam to the USACE **before February 16, 2021*** as part of the 60-day public comment period, and urge the USACE to convey the property in a timely manner.*

**The USACE has stated it will extend the duration of the public comment period following its re-release of the draft report. The updated deadline is not yet known.*

Send email comments to: MplsLocksDisposition@usace.army.mil

Send formal written correspondence to:

District Engineer, St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers
ATTN: Regional Planning and Environmental Division North
180 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

If you're willing, send a copy of your comment letter to: info@thefalls.org

A delay in the project could jeopardize dollars committed by the state and private sector to revitalize the Falls. It may also invite renewed interest in the site as a hydroelectric facility.

We hope you and your board will take quick action and submit a statement on behalf of your organization. We encourage constituents to submit their own comments, too.

For your convenience, we have attached a template to use as a guide when drafting your letter, as well as additional project information and frequently asked questions.

The template is merely a resource. **We encourage you to write openly and from the heart, reflecting your personal opinion about the future of the Upper Lock.**

Like the Minneapolis City Council, the National Park Service and you, Friends of the Falls believes it is time to bring our glorious riverfront back to life – and back to the people of Minnesota.

We always welcome your questions, and you may reach Kjersti or me at the numbers below.

We appreciate your swift response and submission. Thank you for your time and valued support.

Sincerely,



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Project Director, Friends of the Falls
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Enclosures:

- USACE public comment template
- Backgrounder & FAQs