**TEMPLATE COMMENT LETTER IN SUPPORT OF PARTIAL DISPOSITION**

Submit comment letter by email to mplslocksdisposition@usace.army.mil on behalf of your organization **before March 18, 2021** during the 60-day public comment period.

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*Format on organization letterhead*

District Engineer, St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers

ATTN: Regional Planning and Environmental Division North

180 Fifth Street East

St. Paul, MN 55101

mplslocksdisposition@usace.army.mil

Dear Jonathan Sobiech and Nan Bischoff:

*Insert organization name* submits this statement in response to the request for public comment regarding the USACE Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam Disposition Study draft report, first released December 16, 2020, and re-issued January 20, 2021.

*Insert a description of your organization and role.*

*If applicable, describe any community plans issued by your organization that address the Central Riverfront.*

[Organization Name] has long supported a comprehensive approach to riverfront development and thoughtful planning of parks, commercial districts and residential communities near our city’s greatest natural asset – the Mississippi.

In [year], we issued [name of community plan] that outlined [approach and goals in the community plan].

*Why are you/your organization interested in this site? Describe the significance of the Upper Lock or the Falls from your perspective. For example:*

The Upper Lock at St. Anthony Falls is key to the revitalization of the Minneapolis central riverfront. It will enhance the livability of neighborhoods both up and down river, including in our neighborhood of [X].

 *Or:*

The Upper Lock at St. Anthony Falls is the last remaining barrier between the Central Business District and the riverfront. The property does not allow for public access to the river, at a crucial location, and for years now has been a vacant eyesore.

*Or:*

The Upper Lock at St. Anthony Falls sits steps from the Stone Arch Bridge, one of our city and state’s most visited and recognizable attractions. As it sits vacant and unused, the Lock is a poor representation of our dynamic and vital city, and a missed opportunity for the community to further learn about the river.

*Or:*

The Falls is an imminently sacred site to the Dakota people and other Indigenous communities. The area has been desecrated from the first days of European settlement and industrialization. Now closed to commercial navigation, the Lock presents an opportunity to acknowledge this painful history and create a place and program centered on Native voices.

*If applicable, describe any board actions or resolutions passed by your organization related to the Upper Lock. For example:*

[Organization Name] has been pleased to contribute to a community vision for this site, and in [year] joined a coalition of non-profits, cultural advocates and associations in adopting the vision statement: “We support the St. Anthony Falls Upper Lock as the centerpiece of an iconic civic and cultural destination, reflective of our shared history, and our stewardship of clean water, for the use and enjoyment of all.”

*Clearly state opposition to the Army Corps’ recommendation of “full disposition” of the Upper Lock. [The Army Corps has stated they would like to find a new owner for the Lock and provide a monetary incentive to that entity to resume ownership and take on maintenance responsibility in perpetuity.]*

[Organization Name] is opposed to the Army Corps’ recommendation of full disposition of the Upper Lock with monetary incentive.

*Describe why you are opposed to “full disposition.”*

We are aware of no non-federal entity willing and able to fully acquire the Lock and assume associated flood mitigation responsibilities. Furthermore, **Lock operations and maintenance should not be in the hands of a private entity. Should anything go wrong, we do not have confidence that a private, non-government entity would have the wherewithal to manage and pay for repair and recovery.**

*Or:*

With over one million Twin Citians relying on the Upper Pool for water supply, including the City of Minneapolis, City of Saint Paul and the Minneapolis Airport Commission, we cannot leave vital oversight of this infrastructure to unproven parties. **It would be a regional and federal disaster to lose the St. Anthony Falls reservoir due to a failure of the dam or the cutoff wall that exists under the river – and the Lock is intrinsically tied to the dam.**

*Urge the Army Corps of Engineers to (1) maintain ownership and maintenance of the Lock, and (2) quickly transfer “excess” land surrounding the Lock to the City of Minneapolis for public use.*

[Organization Name] urges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to abandon its stated recommendation to fully dispose of the property.

The Corps should continue to own and maintain the Lock, reliably supporting water supply and providing flood mitigation responsibilities.

Excess land that is not necessary for these functions, however, should be quickly transferred to the City of Minneapolis or its designee for public use. This simple action was already directed by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 and requires no further study.

The USACE must not stand in the way of meaningful public use of this site in line with historic preservation, neighborhood and Congressional goals for the Falls.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the result of the Study and express our interest in

the future of this site.

If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact *Insert contact name* at  *Insert contact phone* or *Insert contact email.*

Sincerely,

*Insert signatory name and signature*

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Please email a copy of your comment letter to***info@thefalls.org***.