RESEARCH NEEDS FOR PLANNING TAG

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ISSUE

Beneficial Use of Dredged Material from the Illinois Marine Transportation System

SUMMARY OF PROBLEM

The Illinois Marine Transportation System is a significant asset for Illinois and the United States. The maintenance and management of this system of systems is complex; involving a variety of stakeholders, jurisdictions, and laws. System utility and reliability is accomplished, in part, through waterway navigation channel maintenance commonly referred to as dredging. A significant issue in dredging is overall costs and dredge material placement. Cost reduction can be accomplished by identifying and coordinating with projects and programs that can beneficially use dredge material.

DESIRED RESULTS/OUTCOME

In 2014, Illinois moved 1.2 billion tons of goods via road, rail, air, and water. Nearly nine percent of those tons were moved on water. IDOT understands the economic significance and advantage of marine transportation and is exploring opportunities that promote ports, waterways, the Great Lakes, and intermodal landside infrastructure that allows transportation to, from, and on water. This promotion includes supporting the usage, utility, and reliability of the Illinois Marine Transportation System including the encouragement of dredging activities conducted through the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and others. Section 1122 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2016 requires the USACE to establish a pilot program regarding the beneficial use of dredged material. This includes projects for the purposes of reducing the costs of dredging and dredged material placement/disposal, such as projects that use dredged material for: 1) construction or fill material; 2) civic improvement objectives; and 3) other innovative uses and placement alternatives that produce public, economic, or environmental benefits. The USACE is required to carry out the pilot program in consultation with relevant state agencies and to establish regional beneficial use teams to identify and assist in the implementation of the projects. Implementation must foster federal, state, and local collaboration; implement best practices to maximize the beneficial use of dredged sand and other sediments; and ensure that the use of dredged material is consistent with all applicable environmental laws. IDOT is interested in how it can use dredge material in road construction and other applicable civic improvement programs as well as serve as a statewide coordinator for other innovative usage and placement alternatives that produce public, economic, or environmental benefits that relate to transportation projects and programs.