



MRCTI International Food & Water Security Programme
Sustaining the World's Food-Producing Rivers
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MRCTI Contact:

Jim Gwinner

jgwinner@LS2group.com

314-791-2774

Mississippi River Mayors Present at United Nations Climate Meeting in Bonn

Co-Chairs of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative featured at Conference of Parties, or COP23 on resilience and the global supply chain

Nov. 9, 2017 – BONN, GERMANY: Mayor Frank Klipsch of Davenport, IA and Mayor Lionel Johnson of St. Gabriel, LA are traveling to the United Nations Climate Change Conference ([COP23](#)) in Bonn, Germany this week to represent the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative. The mayors will be on hand for four important reasons:

1. To work with the international community on food and water security issues as most of the world's food production and freshwater withdrawals come from river basins (*the Mississippi River is #1 producer*);
2. To carry the message that disengaging from the Paris Accord jeopardizes jobs and the U.S. economy;
3. The Mayors will also discuss the need to protect \$164 billion in commodity trade;
4. To profile the partnerships the Mississippi River region has at a global level to make our cities more resilient and sustainable.

On Nov. 10, during Water Action Day, Mayor Johnson and Mayor Klipsch will present to 27 international organizations/bodies and over a dozen national leaders from around the world. During these high-level discussions, the mayors will detail the importance of achieving resilience to climate risk through reinforcement of our natural infrastructure. Additionally, the mayors will participate in the signing of the "Bonn Declaration", reaffirming MRCTI's commitment to restoring, protecting, and enhancing the environmental services of water-based systems, and promoting the international food and water security agreement negotiated in Paris during COP21. The agreement has since expanded to basins covering over 70 nations.

On Nov. 11, in participation with the U.S. Climate Action Center, the mayors will join former Vice President Al Gore, the Governors of Virginia and California, as well as global investors to present on the financing options available for large-scale infrastructure renewal. The Mississippi River Corridor has some of the most critical natural infrastructure on Earth, producing more agricultural exports than any other river basin in the world. The mayors will present on the financial partnerships and frameworks necessary to maintain the River Valley's global commodities trade to protect the jobs and economy of the corridor. Additionally, the mayors will present with Walmart on the sustainable agriculture partnership being

developed to deploy market-supported water quality improvement practices across 20 million acres that run through the Mississippi River Basin. Water quality is paramount to supporting the drinking water, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture economies of the Mississippi River. 20 million people in 50 cities drink the water from the Mississippi River, and the top seven economies of the Valley depend on the freshwater of the Mississippi River to generate \$500 billion in annual revenue, making possible 1.5 million jobs.

"'America First' should not mean 'America Alone.' The mayors of one of the world's most important rivers stand united to pursue solutions to the dramatic and persistent disaster challenges we are facing together. Count us in. Wherever our rivers are not linked by geography, they are linked by us and our rivers will comprise a quarter of global GDP by 2050. American engagement in international vehicles is in our economic interest. Otherwise, we cede development of the global supply chain and our prominence in commodities to other nations," asserted Mayor Lionel Johnson of St. Gabriel, LA.

"We've sustained \$200 billion in disaster impacts along the Mississippi River since 2005. My state of Iowa went through floods and a drought just this year. No state along the river has endured less than \$5 billion in losses since 2005. It is imperative we take action to make our corridor more resilient and keep our commodities economy strong. One of the reasons we're going to COP23 is to present to the international investment community on the partnerships necessary to meet the challenges we're facing at scale."

Article VI of the Paris accord allows for the structuring of markets to reduce emissions. Some nations have indicated their intention to make these markets more expensive for non-signatories of the Paris agreement which could increase the cost of U.S. agricultural exports. The mayors intend to discuss this concern with negotiators, emphasizing the need to protect \$164 billion in commodity trade.

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The Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative is comprised of 75 mayors and the association represents cities on the main stem Mississippi from Minnesota to Louisiana. More information can be found on our website at www.MRCTI.org.