



ILLINOIS CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

# Political Papers

APRIL 2017

## NEW PAC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Jim Robbins**

**George Obernagel**

**Jim Reed**

**Bill Bradley**

**Stan Blunier**

**Rob Elliott**

**Bill Christ**

**Members are nominated  
for a two-year term**

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January 27, 2017

The Honorable John Shimkus  
United States House of Representatives  
2117 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Shimkus:

Improvements to the inland waterway transportation system have been a top priority of the Illinois Corn Growers Association (ICGA) for many years. ICGA urges you to include additional funding for modernization and rehabilitation of inland river locks and dams in any infrastructure investment legislative proposal being developed by the new administration and Congress. This issue remains critically important to the state of Illinois and its farmers, manufacturers, laborers, and conservationists.

Our inland rivers provide transportation for products used by every American. Investing in rivers, as well as its roads, rails, and airways, should be included in the President's priority initiative to grow the nation's economy and increase American jobs.

America's inland waterways encompass 112,000 miles, bordering Illinois and 37 other states. Approximately 400 million tons of bulk commodities, valued at \$229 billion, move annually on the system. These products drive American sectors of manufacturing, construction, energy production, agriculture, and many other industries – and the river transporters claim as half the cost of moving by rail and 1/10 of the cost of trucking. A 2013 study released by the American Society of Civil Engineers identified river infrastructure as having the largest return on investment over any other infrastructure sector.

Locks and dams at several locations throughout the U.S. inland system are essential to the most fuel-efficient, safest, and least environmentally impacting mode of transportation. Most of these locks and

## Corn Leaders Lobby in Washington

In March, your elected leadership headed to Washington, DC to visit with the entire Illinois delegation, several leaders in agencies, and partnering associations. This annual visit to Washington is vital to maintain relationships to continue to represent our members.

The top priority for ICGA this year was to remind our elected officials that farmer profitability is a big concern. We discussed ethanol and trade policies that would increase demand and increase corn prices.

Your leaders gave firsthand accounts of the difficulties they are facing on the farm. We also shared the need for lock and dam upgrades. We discussed the recent Farm Bill Listening sessions ICGA held and reminded our delegation that crop insurance is the number one priority of our members.

Your elected officials need more personal stories from their districts. We'd encourage you to help us present an accurate picture of the farm economy by calling your repre-

sentatives and telling them how current corn prices are impacting you.



Pictured: Senator Tammy Duckworth (left), ICGA President Justin Durdan (right)

## WATERWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE—A PLEA

Improvements to the inland waterway transportation system have been a top priority of the ICGA for many years. The new Trump Administration has repeatedly identified improving the nation's infrastructure as a focus in the future. However, waterways are often overlooked and with the estimated time of current projects taking 77 years to start, we just don't have that kind of time. We need improvements now. That's why we sent a letter to Washington, DC urging for the inclusion of locks and dams in future infrastructure packages.

**Why do we need infrastructure improvements?** Locks and dams at several locations throughout the U.S. inland system, are essential to the most fuel-efficient, safest, and least environmentally impacting mode of transportation. Most of these locks and dams were constructed in the 1930s and 1940s, built with 19<sup>th</sup> century technology intended for 1930s

traffic needs. They are in dire need of recapitalization to keep our inland waterways as a viable transportation resource.

**What are the benefits of the proposed improvements?** We advocate for waterway improvements because it can have an impact on the American economy, not just those that depend on these systems. A recent study by University of Tennessee and University of Kentucky analyzed the economic impacts of expediting the construction of Congressionally authorized lock modernization projects in a 10-year timeframe (the same as President Trump's infrastructure plan) rather than the current estimate of 20 years or more. The economic impact was the creation of 350,000 jobs with an economic impact of \$15 billion annually. Clearly, American farmers depend on these waterways, but so do manufacturers of other goods that are important to you and your families. It may not seem like it, but without improvements on the docket, we are facing an impending crisis.

**Appropriations requests:** A big thanks to Congressman Rodney Davis and his colleague Congressman Dave Loebsack of Iowa for initiating a letter to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development urging funding for NESP (Navigational and Ecosystem Sustainability Program), authorized in WRDA 2007.

Between 2005 to 2010, the Corps was appropriated more than \$59 million to conduct preconstruction engineering and design (PED) for NESP. In 2011, however, the Administration stopped budgeting for it. The report language requested in the letter would direct the Corps to continue pre engineering and design in order to ensure NESP is ready to receive a new start and construction funding when such funding becomes available.

ICGA is grateful for the support of Congressmen Bost, Bustos, Danny Davis, Foster, Hultgren, Kelly, Kinzinger, LaHood, Lipinski, and Quigley as the signatories on the letter.

## IL Corn & IL Beef Co-Host Reception



*Pictured:*

*IL Dept of Ag Director Raymond Poe (Center)*

*IL Beef Pres. Mike Martz (left)  
ICGA Pres. Justin Durdan (right)*

On March 21, the Illinois Corn Growers Association and Illinois Beef Association co-hosted a legislative reception in Springfield, IL. The reception was an important time to connect with our state legislature and discuss key issues impacting agriculture.

For ICGA, the top priority continues to be The Consumer Fuel Choice for Illi-

nois bill, SB 1565 and HB 2372. This legislation will remove the sales tax incentive for E10, establish a smaller incentive for E15, and create \$90 million in revenue for the State in FY18. It will also provide \$6 million in FY18 to develop the Illinois ethanol industry.

Thank you to the farmer leaders that attended this important event.

## Pruitt & Perdue—the (Immediate) Future of Ag

The EPA and the USDA are two agencies that arguably have the most direct and the most immediate impact of agriculture. These agencies form policies that tell farmers how to farm, what tools to use, and how their product will enter the marketplace. In essence, these agencies can either suffocate farmers or give them the leeway that they need to contribute to the American economy.

Scott Pruitt was an early Cabinet pick by the Trump Administration to head the EPA. Pruitt has since been confirmed and installed as Administrator at the EPA. However, Sonny Perdue was the eventual pick to head the US Department of Agriculture after weeks of rumors. Currently, Purdue is awaiting Senate confirmation.

Pruitt is a former Attorney General for the state of Okla-

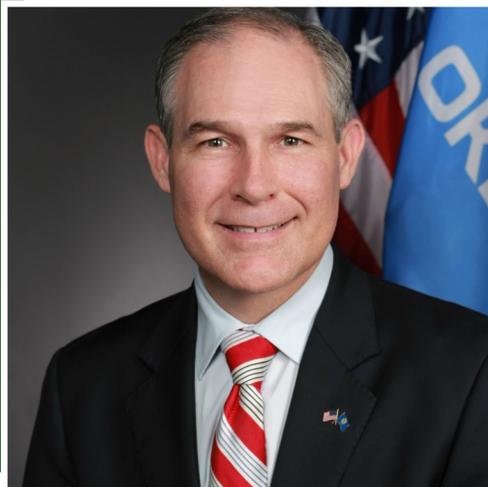
homa before his current position and has considerable experience presiding over regulatory issues.

Perdue is the former Governor of Georgia for the years 2003-2011. Since then, he began Perdue Partners, an exports facilitation business and is on the Governors' Council of the Bipartisan Policy in Washington, DC.

*Pictured:*

*EPA Admin Scott Pruitt (left)*

*USDA Sec Nom Perdue (right)*



# IL Corn Candidate Endorsements

**As the Trump Administration takes form, we offer candidate endorsements to those that we believe are best for the futures of Illinois' corn farmers**

- **AG Assistant to the USEPA Administrator**  
**Candidate: Chip Bowling**  
Bowling is a farmer from Maryland who previously served as NCGA President.
- **Assistant Secretary of the Army**  
**Candidate: Tim Parker**  
Parker has experience in waterways infrastructure that is critical

to the ag economy.

- **Council on Environmental Quality**  
**Candidate: John Scholl**  
Scholl formerly worked at the Illinois Farm Bureau, the EPA in Washington, D.C, and is currently at the University of Illinois. Scholl has an extensive knowledge of the needs of farmers as well as experience in regulatory practices
- **USDA Administrator for FSA**  
**Candidate: Dale Ihry**  
Ihry is the current Executive Director at North Dakota Corn and previously retired from the Farm Service Agency
- **USDA Administrator for RMA**  
**Candidate: Martin Barbre**  
Barbre is an Illinois farmer, a past

ICGA Director, a past NCGA President, and — Clearly, he thoroughly understands the issues that farmers face.

- **IL FSA Director**  
**Candidate: Bill Graf**  
Graf previously served in the role under the most recent Bush Administration
- **IL Rural Development**  
**Candidate: Doug Wilson**  
Wilson previously served in the role under the most recent Bush Administration

## 2016—A Busy Election Year

IL Corn hosted fundraisers throughout the 2016 election cycle for candidates that have an invested history in agriculture.

Fundraising recipients included:

- U.S. Congressman Mike Bost (IL-12)
- U.S. Congressman Rodney Davis (IL-13)
- U.S. Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (IL-17)
- U.S. Congressman John Shimkus (IL-15)
- U.S. Congressman Darin LaHood (IL-18)
- U.S. Congressman Adam Kinzinger (IL-16)

- U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth

After the completion of the this head-turning election cycle, the ninth annual Illinois Corn Growers Association Political Action Committee (PAC) Auction was held on November 21, 2016 in Bloomington. In total, the event raised \$34,940 for the IL Corn State and Federal PACs.

In addition, U.S. Congressman Rodney Davis and U.S. Congresswoman Cheri Bustos came to join the group for dinner and spoke about the momentum in Congress that they hope to initiate for farmers.

**The IL Corn PAC supports candidates that you support. We match member contributions to ensure that our PAC funds are 100% member directed.**



**Pictured: Cong. Mike Bost**

## Illinois Corn Growers Association

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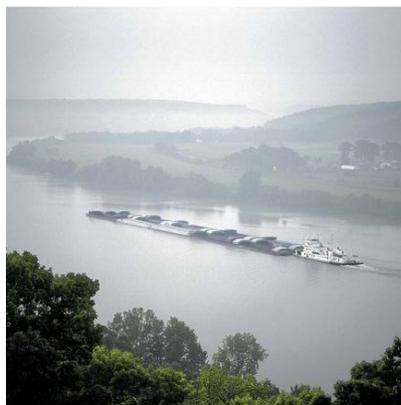


## THE FUTURE OF TRADE—NAFTA

The Trump administration recently chose to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the president said on the campaign trail that he might reconsider the country's position on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). IL Corn is among the numerous organizations that depend on exports through trade and we anticipate the future of international trade agreements. Until new trade agreements are established, we do know one thing: trade works.

The effects of NAFTA show that the agreement was good for agriculture and it is still beneficial. However, we understand that the agreement is two decades old and could be updated to reflect our current economic context. We understand that the Trump Administration is interested in primarily bilateral agreements and that would clearly have an effect on NAFTA, a trilateral

agreement between Canada, Mexico and the United States. We will accept bilateral agreements if that's the choice of this Administration. However, agriculture needs a seat at the table. We need to negotiate for farmers to ensure that we continue to grow our access to global markets, because exports are a critical factor to a farmer's bottom line and to the health of the U.S. economy.



## DONATE

Donating to the ICGA PAC is easy!  
Simply complete your personal check  
and fill out the form below.

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PAC contributions are not tax deductible and cannot be treated as a business expense. For ICGA's PAC Policies and Guidelines, contact the ICGA office at 309-557-3257.