

MRCTI Global River Talks
Sustaining the World's Food-Producing Rivers
Climate Leaders Summit: Beijing, China 2016



Mississippi River
Cities & Towns Initiative
An Effort of U.S. Mayors



Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative Global River Talks: Climate Leaders Summit Beijing, China, June 7-8, 2016

Mayors Urge China Cities Include Natural Infrastructure in Their Low-Carbon Goals

Mississippi River Mayors are sending a delegation to attend the China-U.S. Climate Leaders Summit in Beijing, China. The Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI) is a mayor-led effort comprised of 71 River Mayors committed to creating a coordinated voice for the Mississippi River.

“We know that climate disruption is having an impact on the Mississippi. Over the last several years, the Mississippi River Valley has sustained successive 100, 200, and 500-year flood events, a 50-year drought, Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane Isaac.”

-Chris Coleman, Mayor of St. Paul, MN

With guidance from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Washington, DC—the River Mayors formed a delegation that traveled to Paris for COP21—the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Mayors worked with the U.S. State Department, the United Nations Environment Program, the International Network of Basin Organizations, ecoAmerica, and the International Society of River Science to orchestrate an international side-bar conversation with other major food-exporting river basins of the world in Paris.

“Major river basins—like the Mississippi—are responsible for a significant portion of the world’s food production. As demand for food grows exponentially, we will all need to work together to ensure these basins are resilient to the impacts of climate disruption.”

-Roy Buol, Mayor of Dubuque, IA

In Paris, mayors brokered a food and water security agreement with the Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, the Senegal River Basin Development Organization, and the International Network of Basin Organizations.

The UN has projected the global population to reach 9.6 billion people by 2050. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, that means we will need to produce more food in the next 35 years than we have in the last 10,000. If the largest component of that food production is generated by the major river basins of the world, then we will all need to work together to ensure these basins are resilient to the impacts of climate disruption.

As the major food-producing basins of the world become compromised by climate change, Mississippi River mayors are concerned that four major services of river valleys will be lost—food production, fresh water access, carbon reduction, and disaster mitigation.

“Because of its impact on global trade and its importance to the environmental services of our continent, we are elevating the Mississippi River into global transboundary waterway negotiations. We began this work in Paris and continued it in Mexico, and now again in China.”

-Belinda Constant, Mayor of Gretna, LA

Therefore, Mississippi River Mayors Chris Coleman and Roy Buol will speak to representatives from Chinese Cities in food-producing river basins to urge they make the carbon capturing ability of River ecology part of their platform to reduce carbon intensity.

Mayor Buol presented to the Summit during the Peaking Cities Cutting Emissions Session on June 7. Mayor Coleman is the Closing Ceremony Keynote.

More and more partners are supporting the Mayors’ work. Join us! For more information, please contact MRCTI Executive Director Colin Wellenkamp, cwellenkamp@mrcti.org.

