

## 2022 Legislative Priority: Increase Oversight on USACE Plans to Remotely Control Locks and Dams

**Background:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is in the process of evaluating and implementing new remote off-site control of federal hydroelectric and navigational locks and dams with little to no Congressional oversight or public disclosure, and has not released information on whether federal employees will remain on-site to operate and control this critical infrastructure. While navigation and energy sector stakeholders and federal workers themselves would be able to provide valuable input, USACE has proceeded in darkness.

**Current Status:** Throughout the nation, approximately 2,000 federal government employees at USACE work to ensure 24/7 operations at over 230 federal locks and dams so that commerce can transit across our nation's 25,000 miles of inland waterway while approximately 75 federal hydropower plants at USACE dams generate clean renewable electricity, often in rural areas. IFPTE has observed efforts to introduce remote operations at facilities in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Missouri. We have heard that USACE is contemplating remote operations in Illinois, throughout the Ohio River system, and throughout the South Atlantic Division.

**Impacts:** IFPTE worries about public safety, physical and cyber security, and good stewardship of federal investments, if this plan continues unchecked. We worry that this plan will jeopardize jobs - good paying stable jobs that are often in rural communities and often filled with U.S. veterans. Finally, IFPTE worries that with remote operations, the flow of U.S. interstate commerce and/or the supply of U.S. energy could be more frequently interrupted.

### **Requested Action:**

- Congress should defund and prohibit implementation of off-site remote operation of any USACE hydroelectric and navigational locks and dams until Congress can review the national security, commerce, and public safety implications of off-site operations, and USACE affirms that it will maintain full on-site staffing levels and qualified on-site personnel will operate and control this critical infrastructure throughout the U.S.
- Congress should request that USACE provide information regarding physical security and cybersecurity risks associated with off-site operations. Further Congress should review and investigate compliance with laws, regulations, Presidential executive orders and federal policies on cybersecurity, and compliance with CISA's National Infrastructure Protection Plan for Dams.



Commercial navigators rely on lock and dam operators to direct traffic, keep order, and to assist their deckhands with catching lines in hazardous weather conditions.



USACE Workers rescued the boaters and took action to keep the boat from sinking in the lock which could have snarled the flow of commerce.