US Army Corps of Engineers

Kentucky Lock

Tennessee River, Grand Rivers, KY

GREAT LAKES & OHIO RIVER DIVISION

Project Features

• Kentucky Lock is located at Tennessee River mile 22.4 upstream of the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers. It is 184.3 river miles downstream of Pickwick Lock in Savannah, TN.

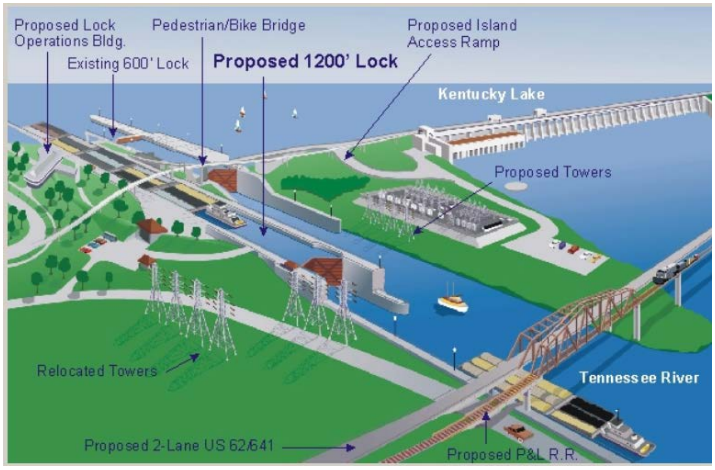
• Kentucky Lock is the lower gateway to over 700 miles of navigable waters in the Tennessee River Basin.

• Kentucky Lake that is formed by Kentucky Dam creates the largest man-made lake east of the Mississippi River.

• Being a Tennessee Valley Authority project, construction started in 1938 and Kentucky Lock was put into permanent operation in September 1944.

• The lock chamber is 600' in length and 110' in width which allow 9 jumbo hopper barges at one time, much less than standard tow sizes today.

• A new lock is required because of the bottle-neck the small chamber, number of users, and double lockages create. In recent years, the average delay per tow has ranged from 8 to 10 hours to use the existing chamber.



Regional Importance

• In coordination with its sister lock (Barkley Lock) these two Corps operated projects serve as navigations "Gateway to the South". Ports south of the Ohio River Basin are heavily dependent on cargo that passes through the locks chamber daily.

• Currently around 57 million tons of cargo valued at over $10B pass through this system each year.

• Kentucky Lock is identified as the most utilized navigation lock in the Lakes and Rivers Division.

Consequences of Not Maintaining the Project

• Failure to maintain the project could result in a halt in the movement of commercial navigation. That stoppage would result in loss of rate savings to the shippers and delayed orders for essential commodities and raw materials.

• Lack of maintenance has and will continue to increase the average delays for tows transiting the lock. The associated significant additional costs are passed on to the customers, and ultimately to the Nation's economy.

New Lock Construction

• The new lock will be 1200’ long and 110’ wide. This will take wait times in excess of 10 hours to 0 hours.

• It will be able to accommodate up to 15 barges and the boat.

• It is the 3rd highest priority lock project in the U.S.

• With efficient funding, the expected completion date is 2024 at a price of $1.25 Billion at a FY2018 price level.

• The project has a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 1.2 at a 7% discount rate and a Remaining Benefit to Remaining Cost Ratio of 1.9.

Additional Information

- 2016 lock tonnage: 27.2M Tons

- CY 2017 average delay (not counting processing time of 3-4 hours): 7 hours 45 minutes

- Recent traffic forecast have indicated that tonnage levels are expected to increase into the foreseeable future.

Congressional Interests

Senator Mitch McConnell, R-KY
Senator Rand Paul, R-KY
Representative James Comer, R-KY-1