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House of Representatives

HONORING THE FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER 20TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM
OF MINNESOTA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the vital work of the Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) on the 20th anniversary of its founding. Since its inception in 1993, this organization and its army of volunteers has dedicated itself to protecting America's greatest river here at the head of navigation. Countless hours of hard work and dedication by FMR in partnership with many other organizations and individuals is making a difference for generations to come.

When the Friends of the Mississippi River was founded in 1993 its mission was to engage citizens in an effort to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities region. The river is one of our nation's most important natural resources, cherished each year by millions of residents and visitors alike. As one of the world's longest rivers, the Mississippi is a defining geographic feature of North America and its watershed drains all or parts of 31 states. The river's ecosystem is a natural resource of global significance, with nearly half of North America's ducks, geese and swans relying on the Mississippi River for food, direction and resting places during seasonal migrations.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of its staff, board and the hundreds of members and volunteers that support it, FMR is a one of Minnesota's leading citizen organizations for land conservation, watershed protection and river stewardship. As the ecological vitality of the Upper Mississippi River continues to be under threat, FMR faces the important task of

protecting the river's ability to support native plant and animal species. Today, FMR continues to lead efforts critical to the long-term wellbeing of the Mississippi River and the Twin Cities region. FMR provides expertise and technical assistance critical to the protection of the Mississippi River and it continues to engage public and private landowners, local governments and concerned citizens as a steward for current and future generations.

FMR advocacy has helped to make the Twin Cities a model for watershed planning and decision-making. Over the past two decades, FMR has nobly fought for the protection and improvement of the Mississippi River and watershed, and their hard work deserves recognition.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in rising to honor the commitment and dedication of the Friends of the Mississippi River as we commemorate their 20th anniversary today, as they continue the legacy to restore and protect this river for future generations of Minnesotans and indeed all Americans.