

November 9, 2016

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
5850 Delmar Blvd.
Suite A
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Senator McCaskill:

We are writing to request that you support Missouri farmers, citizens, and taxpayers by ensuring the Water Resources and Development Act of 2016 (WRDA) includes a watershed study that will lead to equitable flood risk management on the Mississippi River. We are concerned that Section 4010, Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers flood risk management, of S. 2848 will result in the advancement of a previously developed, unjustified and misguided flood control plan that is potentially devastating for Missouri communities and residents and we urge you to support amendments to this provision.

Despite multiple studies and plans being completed following the devastating 1993 flood, the flood risk and potential for such a devastating event happening again on the Upper Mississippi River remains high. A lack of regional planning and consensus has led to a decentralized flood risk management approach that has allowed communities to take flood risk management into their own hands, often pushing the risk of flooding onto unaware neighbors. To truly reduce flood risk in the Upper Mississippi River Basin, states, federal agencies and regional stakeholders must work together to upgrade and maintain models and datasets to ensure we are making flood management decisions based on the best available data; work collectively to address legacy issues that affect landowners; and pursue a Flood Risk Management Master Plan that relies on a decision-making process that involves communities, agencies, and stakeholders.

We are concerned that the study components in Section 4010 are focused too heavily on recommending specific Army Corps construction projects. The proposed study requires reliance on previously developed plans that were deemed to be economically unfeasible and establishes a new, undefined "system-wide benefits" standard to make decisions. Given these study components, we are concerned that the result of this study will be to recommend components of the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan "Plan H" which proposes levee construction by upper Mississippi levee districts while pushing water onto Missouri lands in Pike County, Lincoln County, and other Missouri locations. Lack of comprehensive flood risk management on the river has already resulted in ad hoc implementation of this unjustified plan and levee construction that puts Missouri communities and landowners at risk.

We understand that the Senate and House passed WRDA bills are currently being conferenced together to develop a final bill. We strenuously request that you oppose the current language in Section 4010 of

S. 2838 and work to ensure that it is not adopted in the final bill, or is amended to utilize a comprehensive, integrated watershed study approach.

Thank you for your close attention to the matter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Stokes
Executive Director
Great Rivers Habitat Alliance

CC: Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Missouri Department of Conservation
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
United States Army Corp of Engineers, Rock Island District
United States Army Corp of Engineers, Saint Louis District
Mississippi River Commission