

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 25, 2011

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica and Ranking Member Rahall,

We write to draw the Committee's attention to the important and timely issue of flooding and water management. As you are certainly aware, Iowa and the Midwest have recently seen a number of severe floods and storm related disasters ranging from 1993 to 2008, and are now just starting the recovery process from the flooding on the Missouri River. Further, earlier this year we saw one of the most damaging floods ever on the Mississippi River.

Many states in the Midwest saw devastating damage and were affected by the Missouri River flooding this year. From the western border of Iowa on the Missouri River to the eastern border on the Mississippi River and in between, Iowa residents are specifically affected by numerous flood control structures and navigation measures which all regulate water levels and water management in and surrounding the state. Whether it is dams and reservoirs or levees and locks, Iowans are certainly aware of the benefits such structures provide but also of the risks posed during flood events.

Recently, the Governors of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming formed a working group to address Missouri River flooding issues. They have also laid out their concerns in a letter sent to our offices which we wanted to share with you and is enclosed. The letter highlights a number of issues and questions the Governors would like to address with respect to Army Corps flood management and we believe would be appropriate for discussion in a Congressional hearing, among other topics outlined below.

We respectfully request the Committee hold a hearing to hear testimony from flooding and weather experts, local or state officials, and Army Corps of Engineers representatives to discuss the current regulatory and statutory environment governing the development or altering of operation manuals and plans, maintenance, and use of dams, reservoirs, levees and locks under Army Corps jurisdiction. In order to ensure the Army Corps has the resources to perform their duties fully, a discussion on the fiscal situation faced by the Army Corps with respect to maintaining these structures for their intended purposes would be informative as well.

Additional questions could be explored such as: should management plans and policies be examined periodically to account for a variety of changes in weather, hydrology, or land use changes; how much flexibility is the Army Corps allowed to update management plans if they or state and/or local officials consider it to be necessary; does the Army Corps have adequate resources for maintenance of these crucial structures; do local and state governments have enough input on management plan decisions or initiating changes; and what other potential issues or factors are affecting the operation of these structures for their flood control purposes?

As a result of the Floods of 2008 and ongoing flooding issues, we urged President Obama last year to include a request in his Fiscal Year 2012 Budget for the Army Corps to perform scientific studies of the management plans for the Army Corps flood-control reservoirs in Iowa. We also wrote to you earlier in the year to ask for a hearing on these issues. Research indicates flood events and severe weather are increasing so we feel it is appropriate for the Committee to examine policies dictating management and operation of reservoirs and other flood control structures so that such policies can be tailored, if necessary, to ensure flexibility and account for new developments.

Through this hearing, we hope to be able to examine the regulatory and statutory environment the Army Corps works within to ensure they have the ability, resources, and can receive and accept a stronger level of input from local, state, or federal officials to ensure the management and operation of critical flood control infrastructure stays up to date and flexible in an evolving environment. Given the urgency of addressing current disaster recovery needs and the seemingly increasing instances of flood disasters, we again respectfully urge the Committee to hold a hearing as soon as possible to address these important topics. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Dave Loeb sack  
Member of Congress



Leonard Boswell  
Member of Congress