

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 7, 2019

Lieutenant General Todd Semonite
Chief of Engineers
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G St. NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Lieueutant General Semonite:

We write in strong support of permanent flood protection for the Souris River Valley and urge you to sign a Chief's report that will advance the project to construction. The completion of the Souris River feasibility study marks a major milestone on the path from the catastrophic 2011 floods to stability and economic vitality for the largest city in northwestern North Dakota.

The 2011 floods devastated the cities of Burlington, Minot, Logan and Sawyer, North Dakota, forcing the evacuation of 11,000 residents and causing \$1 billion in damages. Despite subsequent repairs to the existing federal levee, there is little confidence it can provide protection during another significant flood event. In response, state and local officials have developed the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project (MREFPP) that will lead to basin-wide flood protection. On their own initiative and using their own funds, state and local leaders have initiated construction of elements of the MREFPP.

The proposed federal project serves as a critical piece of the broader MREFPP. It includes a high flow bypass channel to be activated when Souris River flows exceed 3,000 cubic feet per second. The proposed project also includes levees, river closure structures and a railroad bridge. When combined with other elements of Phase 1 of the MREFPP, the project will remove 60 percent of Minot residents from the regulatory floodplain.

The benefits of the project, however, extend beyond the protection of those within the current regulatory floodplain. We know from the 2011 flood experience that major disruptions in Minot create a ripple effect throughout the region. Flooding in Minot deeply affected operations and activities at Minot Air Force Base. It disrupted a growing oil and gas industry in western North Dakota that depended on Minot for basic services, and adversely affected the regional agricultural industry. There is no reason to believe that a significant flood event in the future would be any less disruptive to military and economic activities in the region.

Because of the benefits of the project to those directly in the current floodplain as well as for the state and nation as a whole, we strongly urge you to sign the chief's report and advance this project toward construction. We reiterate that it functions as a vital stepping stone toward the broader flood protection efforts envisioned by the MREFPP, which will further magnify the benefits of proceeding with the Souris River project.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you as the Souris River project moves forward.

Sincerely,



JOHN HOEVEN
U.S. Senator



KEVIN CRAMER
U.S. Senator



KELLY ARMSTRONG
U.S. Congressman