

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2012

Vice President Joe Biden
Office of the Vice President
The Capitol, Room S-212
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Vice President,

We recently learned that you will be travelling to Ames, Iowa later this week to visit Iowa State University and participate in an event that will highlight manufacturing and American innovation. Given its rich history of advancing new scientific breakthroughs that have helped to spur new developments in American innovation, we applaud your decision to choose Iowa State University as the host for this event. And although we are pleased that you have chosen to visit Ames and the Iowa State campus later this week, we are writing you today to ask that during your trip to Iowa you make time in your schedule to visit the communities along the Missouri River that were hardest hit by last year's historic flooding.

Last year, similar requests were made of the President in advance of his travel to our state. Although he was not able to accommodate these requests, it is our hope that your upcoming visit to Iowa will give the opportunity to visit these communities.

Last year we saw nearly 61 Million Acre Feet of runoff enter the Missouri River system. The previous record for runoff was set in 1997, at 49 Million Acre Feet. The sheer volume of water entering the reservoir system led the the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take drastic measures to evacuate water from the system, eventually leading to record high water releases from Gavins Point Dam of 160,000 cfs, a release rate that more than doubled the previous record of 70,000 also set in 1997. The end result of this was severe flooding that left the affected families, farms, and communities under water for nearly four months. As such, this flooding event was substantially different from most floods in which the water rises quickly and then soon recedes.

The agriculture sector of western Iowa's economy was especially hard hit by the rising waters. Over a quarter million acres (255,000) of some of the most productive crop land in the world was flooded. An estimated \$82.1 million was lost in 2011 alone due to damaged or lost crops and unplanted acres. Not only did standing water eliminate the 2011 crop, but it is highly unlikely that farmers will be able to put this ground back into production for the 2012 season and beyond. Much of the topsoil has washed away, and producers will have to contend with large piles of sand, silt, and other debris that's been deposited in their fields.

Last summer, we introduced legislation to prevent this type of extreme flooding from reoccurring in the future. H.R. 2942 would require the Army Corps of Engineers to recalculate the total amount of flood control storage space within the Missouri River Reservoir System so that it is sufficient to control the largest flood experienced in the System. The bill would also require the Corps to adjust the System's two flood control storage zones prior to the runoff season each year to ensure that there is adequate space in each to prevent serious downstream flooding.

Last fall, the Corps conducted a "listening tour" up and down the Missouri River. At each stop they heard one resounding message: "increase the storage capacity in the reservoirs to prevent similar flooding in the future." However, although the Missouri's water has since retreated to its banks, many who live and work along the River are concerned that sufficient steps have not been taken to ensure we do not experience a repeat of last year's flooding in the future.

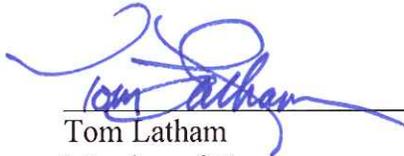
Time spent in the communities hardest hit by last year's flooding will give you a firsthand understanding of the post-flood challenges that these communities continue to face and will provide you with important insights into the type of action my constituents expect the federal government to undertake to protect them from similar flooding in the future.

We stand ready to help in any way possible to facilitate this visit. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us for assistance. Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Steve King
Member of Congress



Tom Latham
Member of Congress



Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress