

November 4, 2011

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
7701 Telegraph Road
Alexandria, VA 22315-3860

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to express our concern and opposition to the Red River Diversion Project as proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of St. Paul and local Fargo City Commissions.

As a local landowner and farmer, this project will have a very negative effect on me and fellow farmers and rural residents. When local city and state officials went to Washington to present their case for this diversion, were there any negative impacts mentioned? The impact of this project to the rural area has not been entirely considered.

Certainly, from the beginning the commission's attitude has been to take land without questioning the effects because "there is nothing out there anyway," as one city commissioner stated. Farmers are an integral part of this community and the world but we are constantly being taken for granted and disregarded. The land taken for this project is not just land that we own; it is much more than that. It is our livelihood. The land that we farm is, one could say, our job. When this land is taken away, a piece of our life is taken away as well and it is that that cannot be replaced with money.

I have personally experienced the effects of living outside a diversion project since the 1990s. Ever since the West Fargo Sheyenne Diversion was built, my crops and those of my neighbors have been destroyed and decimated year after year. My farmstead has also flooded twice since the installation of the diversion. A diversion acts as a dam, forcing water to flood areas that would otherwise drain properly. Yet West Fargo City Commission has not voiced any concern or even acknowledged that this is happening.

This Red River Diversion will permanently remove from production thousands of acres of our farmland producing corn, wheat, soybeans, and sugar beets. The local economy will lose the inputs farmers purchase to produce those crops. The local grain elevators will lose the grain sales. Has there been any mention of these negative economic impacts?

Fargo is currently building levies and flood walls for much less money than this diversion project will cost. This diversion does not solve the problem of flooding in the Red River Valley, but merely shifts the problem around Fargo. This plan negatively affects residents both upstream and downstream as well as those living outside it that are miles away from the Red River. If

flood protection should be employed, it should be a permanent fix to Fargo's flooding problem that considers these residents as well.

In the words of the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack:

"We need to speak with a single common voice to the entire country so that they understand and appreciate that it's more than cities. It is rural America that makes this country so special and we need to preserve it and defend it and fight for it and invest in it and make it grow for the next generation."

Fargo needs flood protection as we all do but taking thousands of acres of valuable Red River Valley farmland out of production forever and flooding many additional acres cannot help the situation. This does not solve the problem but only shifts the burden from Fargo to the surrounding communities. Please consider the residents in these communities.

Sincerely,

Allen Libbrecht
Marilyn Libbrecht

Rural Residents and Landowners