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November 5, 2011

Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
ATTN: CECW-P (IP)  
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Alexandria, VA 22315-3860

We are writing in opposition to the April 2011 Locally Preferred Plan (North Dakota Diversion with storage and staging) for flood control in the Red River Valley. I, Rhoda Ueland, am owner of properties and farmland bordering the Red River 2 miles west of Comstock, Minnesota.

The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, said, "**Do what is right and just.**" We would like to think that the Local Sponsors of the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) from the city of Fargo, ND and the Army Corps of Engineers are also wise. However, it has become painfully apparent that, in this case, this is not true. Despite the fact that other major cities have dealt effectively with flooding issues by constructing protection within their own city, Fargo refuses to deal internally to solve their personal long-term flooding issues. Viable options include widening, straightening, dredging the river, erecting permanent floodwalls, or erecting a ring dike around their city. Numerous retention areas, i.e. land unsuitable for farming, have also proved a very viable option. This is also a common-sense approach to basin-wide protection for the entire Red River Valley.

Fargo was built in a swamp, continues to build in a swamp, and encourages building in their swamp within the flood plain, as evidenced by land they have annexed to the south and west and issued building permits for schools, businesses, homes, etc to build on. Ask yourselves this question, "If I had a 'pre-existing condition', would my health insurance providers pay for my health care?" Absolutely not. This is exactly the same scenario Fargo/LPP Sponsors are creating. Due to their intentional mistake of encouraging building in this swamp (floodplain), the local sponsors of the LPP now intend the rest of the state to pay with their taxes for the protection of their city. What Fargo has done to get this far has improved the cost-benefit ratio the Army COE looks at to justify a project at another's expense. Ironically, the proposed LPP Diversion would be constructed far enough south so as to include protection for Fargo's newest annexed land. We ask you, is this "**right and just**"? It should be quite apparent this land is best suited for agricultural production rather than city development.

"Let's destroy others to protect ourselves" is basically the Local Sponsors motto, as acknowledged by the Army COE. Quoting the 10/20/11 Fargo Forum editorial "River Setbacks Policy" for city of Fargo; "...the removal of vulnerable riverside developments caused untold trauma among homeowners who were forced to move." With due respect to these displaced urban people, likewise, if the LPP is approved, rural people who live upstream of the proposed diversion are on the

verge of being "forced to move." Many of the people in these communities that would be affected have never flooded. The "untold trauma" that will result due to the unjust destruction of cities, property, homes, churches, schools, cemeteries, etc. is too vast to comprehend. The Army COE acknowledges in the FEIS the negative implications of this proposed project are far-reaching with far too many unknowns. Tens of thousands of Prime Red River Valley agricultural acreage will be inundated with floodwaters. Hard-working farmers, many of whom are 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> generation farmers, will be forced off the land and forced to change occupations. Fargo is dependant on these rural communities, yet Fargo refuses to listen to anyone who suggests anything different than a diversion of floodwaters onto the land that has bolstered their economy for the past 140 years. Is this "**right and just**"?

We have ancestors buried in several different cemeteries in the community. We also have a family cemetery dating back to the 1800's on our property. We demand concrete answers, not more nebulous comments in response to our concerns. As another example, I quote the Army COE in response to grave relocation, "It's far too early to know which-if any- graves might need to be moved." For the innumerable people who have ancestors buried in those cemeteries potentially affected by the diversion, being told those cemeteries will have from 3.6 inches-9 feet of water again evokes that sense of "untold trauma". Invariably these cemeteries would be deluged in the spring, wreaking havoc. Imagine yourself, bereaved by the loss of a loved one, attempting to plant flowers at their gravesite to pay your respects as is customary prior to Memorial Day. I suppose you should plant them Christmas Day in North Dakota/Minnesota snow/frozen ground instead?? Relocation of these cemeteries is not an option.

Our property has never flooded. With the proposed diversion, our property would be inundated with at least 5 feet of water. During the great Depression of the 1930's, my grandfather held onto the land homesteaded by his father in 1871, enduring many hardships and sacrifices to do so. With that same diligent persistence and respect for the land, my father continued this legacy, farming this land for the next 67 years until his death in 2002. It is our intention to honor this heritage as the land has now remained in the family for 140 years. It is our dream to someday pass this legacy on to our children. Upon learning of this proposed diversion (Fargo Dam), our dreams have turned to nightmares. We do not speak for ourselves alone as evidenced by the strong opposition to this project in the Army COE's 1000 page FEIS Report. The proposed "Diversion" is only resulting in "Division". Is this "**right and just**"?

If the Army COE Engineers approves and passes Fargo's LPP Plan, Fargo will pay the price for their absurdity. With costs increasing, if this project doubles in price can Fargo afford it? Absolutely not. This catastrophic project would likely be only halfway completed before funding is depleted. Aaron Snyder of the US Army COE, St. Paul, Mn District, has stated the Army COE "likes big projects". Apparently the reason that the only method they are willing to consider is a diversion is that it is

the biggest, most expensive option available. There are many more plausible and less costly options for permanent flood protection for Fargo.

Fargo is racing to get this diversion passed. **SLOW DOWN.** We are asking you to seriously consider the far-reaching negative implications this would have and to seriously consider all viable options available **INCLUDING** those options presented by the opposition. Most importantly ask yourselves the question, **IS THIS "RIGHT AND JUST?"**

Finally, our founding fathers instituted in our U.S. Constitution that owning property is our God-given right. The government cannot take it away. This right will be violated if the Army COE approves the April 2011 Locally Preferred Plan (North Dakota Diversion with storage and staging) for flood control in the Red River Valley.

Sincerely,  
Rhoda K. Ueland & Martin B. Ueland,  
Molly, Martin and Narve Ueland

*Rhoda K. Ueland*