

November 4, 2011

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

To whom it may concern:

Let me begin this letter by bringing to light that I am considered a resident of the "staging area" for the dam/diversion. While this may be true, the reality is that my home is not impacted by the dam/diversion as it is well above the 100-year flood plain and only minimally impacted by even a 500-year flood, so I want to be clear that I do not oppose the plan for personal reasons. We moved to our farmstead primarily for two reasons – a small-town community setting to raise our children, and a desire for peace, quiet and solitude -- an escape from the big city life of Fargo. In reality, if this dam/diversion proceeds against all common sense, we will have that in spades since we will have no more neighbors. No, the reason that I oppose this dam/diversion is because it is not the best solution for the Red River Valley.

For many of us, living in the country is our refuge; that way of life is one of the best things about North Dakota. Why are our lives or our lifestyles worth less than those who wish to develop onto the floodplain south of Fargo?

This plan is being pursued for one reason and one reason only. It is obvious. Fargo cannot grow west because it is blocked by West Fargo. It cannot grow east because it is blocked by Minnesota. It does not want to grow north because of the airport and settling ponds, so it wants to grow south. South is nothing but flood plain, so let's build on the flood plain and create a new New Orleans of sorts by forming a new Lake Agassiz to the south at the expense of families and communities who acted responsibly and built above the flood plain. Yes, let's do that. No, let's not; it is illegal. It is greed which is motivating this choice, and nothing else.

I would like to know how this ND dam/diversion plan, which clearly protects land currently in the 100-year flood plain and earmarks it for prime Fargo development and expansion (i.e. Rutten Park area) while flooding out communities which are above the 100-year flood plain (i.e. Christine, Bakke, Comstock, Hickson, etc.), can reconcile against FEMA's Executive Order 11988.

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/ehplaws/eo11988.shtml>

The Corp's preference has been noted as the Minnesota diversion option. It is less expensive, less destructive, and it protects the Fargo/Moorhead community we know today. Furthermore, there is documentation in the FEIS Appendix O which further speaks to this and confirms the *real* reason behind the choice of the ND dam/diversion over the Minnesota diversion option.

ftp://ftp.usace.army.mil/pub/mwp/Fargo_Moorhead_Final_Feas_FIS/Appendix_O_Plan_Formulation.pdf

#3

Begin ND diversion channel
further North
Civil

Again, the ND alignment is a locally preferred
alignment and therefore they chose the general

location for the inlet. **Their reasoning for the location
of the inlet being further South than the MN alignment
was to accommodate the city of Fargo's current future
plans of development** ~~and to protect the city from the
Wild Rice River flooding to the South.~~

There are other options (the MN option preferred by the Corp) which protect Fargo as it is within its current borders without destroying six communities (Bakke, Hickson, Oxbow, Comstock, Christine and Wolverton), four school districts (Kindred, Richland 44, Breckenridge and Barnesville) in four counties (Cass, Clay, Richland, Wilkin) across two states (MN, ND). Since the MN diversion begins *after* the Wild Rice enters the Red, it would be mitigated at that point, so the argument from Appendix O highlighted in green above is moot. Why are we pursuing such a destructive and fiscally irresponsible plan?

I am sick and tired of all the lies and misinformation being spread by the city of Fargo. Case in point is the letter from Darrel Vanyo to Richland County (attached and referenced in the link below).

<http://ezhostmail.com/cass-county-darrel-vanyo-ltr-to-richland-county.pdf>

The lies and duplicity doesn't end there. The residents of Oxbow, Hickson and Bakke were deceived on the full scope and impact of the dam/diversion until AFTER Fargo got their ½ cent sales tax measure passed. Classy. It is also no coincidence that the path of the dam/diversion falls smack dab on top of the Kindred/Fargo school district lines.

I would like to know how many Fargo residents actually prefer this so-called LPP (Locally Preferred Plan). I've spoken to many residents in Fargo, and so far I can think of only three --- Walaker, Vanyo and Mahoney. Seriously---how many Fargo residents really support this plan??? Sure, they voted for flood protection a year or two ago, but that was before the details of this dam diversion were announced. Somehow, Walaker is taking that vote as a mandate to destroy communities upstream and downstream. Now that the facts are starting to trickle out, how many Fargo residents are still in favor of this plan? It is clear from comments our local residents are making regarding this dam/diversion that it does not have even a modicum of support from the citizens of the Red River Valley. How is it that the wishes of a few can be forced upon the many? As a supplement to my letter, I respectfully request that you review each of the links below to truly gauge the sentiment of our region. Before a decision of this magnitude moves one inch further, educate yourselves on what the people here really want. They do not want this dam/diversion.

Comments from citizens of the Red River Valley:

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/09/23/red-river-diversion-leaders-delegates-talk-in-dc/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/09/27/former-news-broadcaster-leads-outreach-on-diversion/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/09/21/leaders-request-30-million-toward-fargo-moorhead-diversion/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/09/03/diversion-discussion-local-sponsors-on-hook-for-51m-in-i-29-costs/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/08/31/rep-collin-peterson-i-have-to-be-more-realistic/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/08/30/forum-editorial-a-smart-option-for-flood-work/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/08/22/another-5-2-million-in-fargo-flood-buyouts-approved/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/08/13/forum-editorial-a-6-billion-flood-risk-for-fargo/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/08/10/fargo-to-seek-extension-of-infrastructure-sales-tax-to-help-pay-for-flood-control/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/07/14/forum-editorial-surviving-a-%e2%80%98big-one%e2%80%99-is-the-goal/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/06/27/fargo-moorhead-ok-diversion-agreement/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/06/14/moorhead-officials-miffed-at-corps%e2%80%99-capacity-changes/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/05/26/diversion-could-get-lobbyist/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/05/26/forum-editorial-diversion-must-be-priority/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/05/24/were-in-a-state-of-emergency-homeowners-pack-kindred-diversion-meeting/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/04/20/meeting-may-ease-diversion-concerns/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/04/12/diversion-would-keep-cass-county-drier/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/04/04/red-river-diversion-upstream-neighbors-concerned/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/04/03/new-diversion-foes-minndak-upstream-coalition-forms-to-try-to-stop-project/>

<http://topics.arenavoices.com/2011/04/01/boards-to-make-diversion-decision/>

<http://topics.areavoices.com/2011/04/01/flood-group-forms-committee-to-plan-for-oxbow-hickson-bakke-subdivision-buyouts/>

<http://topics.areavoices.com/2011/03/31/red-diversion-project-keeps-evolving/>

<http://topics.areavoices.com/2011/03/30/flood-fight-2011-diversion-price-tag-rises/>

<http://topics.areavoices.com/2011/03/30/latest-corps-diversion-information-shows-buyouts-warranted-for-all-of-oxbow-hickson-and-bakke-subdivision/>

<http://topics.areavoices.com/2011/03/26/reaching-an-agreement-on-diversion-a-challenge/>

Yes, many of the comments come from individuals who have made more than one entry, but the votes are all from unique residents across the valley. The true sentiments of the general populace are eye opening. It's time to listen to THE PEOPLE and not to the select few who pretend to serve. The only things they are serving are their self-interests. This flood mitigation option is not in the best interest of the Red River Valley.

Action for the Corp: I would like to see the actuarial studies done by the Corp which show how many lives will be LOST due to the dam/diversion. In their recently released reports, they claim the dam/diversion will ultimately save lives. **What I would like to see is an actuarial study which will show how many lives will be lost when I-29 and Highway 75 are raised 10 feet in the air and cars plunge into the deep gorges on either side where now we have only a gentle slope. I would be especially concerned about how these numbers will escalate during the event of a spring flood coupled with the icy roads typical of the season.** How many lives will be lost as victims careen off the roads into freezing flood waters? You are putting theoretical life loss of a .02% chance of a flood up against a 100% certainty of death under the scenario below happening each and every year.

- Now...just fast forward to what that interstate will look like built up ten feet into the air and surrounded on both sides by water just as deep and with a current typical of a flood.
- Now remember a typical April day (i.e. snow, sleet, freezing rain).
- Now recall how many cars land in the ditch on any given spring weather event.
- Now envision all those cars sliding into the ditch and submerged in the floodwaters.
- Now think about all the deaths as a result of this dam/diversion.
- Now tell me...is this really the best solution?

Tim Mahoney openly stated that they did not want to place dike all the way through town because they would have to buy out too many more homes and they don't want to lose all that tax base. When in reality, if those displaced people rebuild within Fargo, no tax base is lost.

I find it hypocritical for the city of Fargo to seek sympathy for its tax base and yet are willing to destroy entire communities and destroy substantial tax bases in the Kindred and Richland school districts not to mention Barnesville and Breckenridge.

Trying to out engineer the river is a recipe for trouble. It's like you are trying to "build a better mouse trap" here. Is this just an exercise to flex your superior engineering muscles with those victims outside the dam/diversion your lab rats? Look at the people along the Mississippi who built their levees only to watch them be blown apart by the Corps so the water could consume the natural flood plain. The only difference is here it is the reverse situation. The Corp is devising a plan to protect the flood plain and those who have built on the flood plain plus those who would wish to build there as part of Fargo's reach to grab more land to expand —all at the expense of those who live above the flood plain and have never had flood issues. Case in point — Rutten (Water) Park this spring is clearly in the 100-year flood plain, and yet Fargo wants to protect that land and instead flood out communities who do not live in the flood plain (that is, until Fargo builds its nice little dam project). Who does not see a disaster waiting to happen here?

I find it hard to believe that a .7" benefit to Hendrum is prioritized in comparison to the amount of feet being place on southern communities like Oxbow, Hickson, Bakke, Christine, Comstock and Wolverton, not to mention the devastation to four school districts – Kindred (losing 25% of its tax base), Richland 44 (losing 29% of its tax base), plus Barnesville via Comstock and Breckenridge via the Wolverton area. This myopic plan is beyond reason. Tell me again how many families lose their homes if the diversion goes through Minnesota?

If this was the only solution to save Fargo, or even the best solution to save Fargo, I would acquiesce and grant my blessing. From the facts I've mentioned above, this is clearly not the case. The Corp needs to do what is right for the entire Red River Valley and not what Fargo wants – a blank check to go develop on the flood plain.

Respectfully submitted,

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