



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



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Mr. Theodore A. Brown, P.E.
Chief, Planning and Policy Division
Directorate of Civil Works
Headquarters
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CECW-P (SA)
7701 Telegraph Road
Alexandria, VA 22315-3860

RE: Final Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management, Cass and Richland Counties, North Dakota and Clay and Wilkins Counties, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Brown:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Chief of Engineers Report, and the Final Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project, Cass and Richland Counties, North Dakota, and Clay and Wilkins Counties, Minnesota. We offer the following comments and recommendations based upon the jurisdiction or special expertise of our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

GENERAL COMMENTS

The FWS is authorized under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) to provide recommendations to the Corps on federally funded water development projects. Based on information available at this time and the impact analysis outlined in the Final Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report (July 2011), the FWS recommends that, should the Corps and the local project sponsors proceed with the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Flood Risk Reduction Project, the Federally Comparable Plan (FCP or MN 35K Alternative) Diversion Channel Alternative be the selected Alternative.

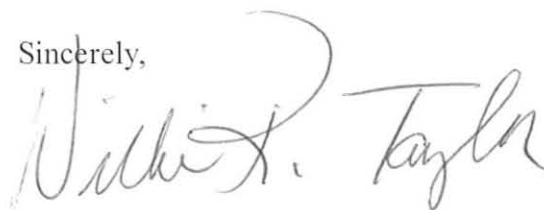
Adverse ecological impacts will occur with any of the Diversion Channel Alternatives. For the following reason, however, the FCP Alternative would result in less severe ecological impacts than the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) Diversion Channel Alternative:

1. The LPP Alternative is anticipated to adversely impact approximately 189 more acres of wetland than the FCP Alternative;
2. The LPP Alternative, as proposed, would result in 36 more acres of adverse impacts to aquatic habitat than the FCP Alternative;
3. The LPP Alternative would adversely impact 5 rivers in addition to the main stem of the Red River;
4. The LPP Alternative, as proposed, would result in 110.3 more acres of adverse impacts to forest habitat than the FCP Alternative; and
5. Apart from the work that would occur within the Red River and the adjacent riparian habitat, the land uses that would be primarily affected by the FCP Alternative have limited wildlife habitat value.

For a complete list of FWS recommendations please refer to the FWS' Final Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report (attachment 2 within the Corps Final Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement). The report is also enclosed for your convenience.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments. If you have questions concerning the Department's comments, please contact Tony Sullins, FWS, Field Supervisor, Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office at 612-725-3548, extension 2201, or email Tony_Sullins@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Willie R. Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "W".

Willie R. Taylor
Director, Office of Environmental Policy
and Compliance

Enclosure