

November 2, 2011

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
ATTN: CECW-P(IP)  
7701 Telegraph Road  
Alexandria, VA 22315-3860

We, Matthew and Rachel Ness, are writing in strong opposition to the Fargo/Moorhead Diversion and Dam Project. The project will only benefit a small part of the Fargo/Moorhead area, while creating more water problems throughout the Red River Valley Basin area. We feel this project would be a gigantic mistake and waste of taxpayer dollars. In fact, there are other issues in our own state that need to be resolved first; Devils Lake, Minot, Bismarck, and all the road and infrastructure problems in the western part of North Dakota.

We farm a couple miles south of the proposed diversion along the Red River and this diversion would store water on all of our farmland that has never been threatened by flooding before. The result of this project would take away my livelihood and devastate my farm and that has been in my family for four generations. Federal crop insurance would not cover the losses from this man-made plan making our livelihood extremely risky. Many communities, churches, farms, schools, and homes would be non-existent with this dam. Thousands of acres of prime farmland would be affected in this project. In today's world of an ever increasing population and an expected future food shortage, this Diversion project would further compound this issue.

The fear of safety is also another concern with the diversion/dam. The project has many farmsteads and homes that would be ring-diked. With the increased water level, many township roads will not be built high enough to access these living areas. The threat of a fire or emergency during this recurrent water storage time interval would be life threatening, as first respondents would not be able to get there in a timely matter. Everyone in our area is being asked to give up their livelihood, heritage, and safety in this plan.

While we agree that Fargo/Moorhead needs to have permanent flood protection, this radical plan the Corps has planned is illogical. There are too many holes in this current plan and too many foreseeable problems. Both Fargo/Moorhead cites are currently building projects to protect themselves to 42.5 feet. This along with retention throughout the Red River Valley Basin would help the entire valley, not just Fargo. Fargo leaders have even stated that their main driving force for this project is to protect for future growth. Fargo is geographically limited for growth to the south, therefore, pushing the diversion/dam further south. This would allow the cities of Fargo/Moorhead to develop in the flood plain, while flooding land (our land and those south of the diversion) that is currently much higher and drier! This plan is currently trying to protect Fargo/Moorhead from a mythical 500 year flood event at the cost of potentially flooding our land regularly and taking away homes and livelihoods.

We feel this current plan is built on Fargo/Moorhead's greed and fear, and that there are better alternatives. We strongly encourage you to oppose this project.

Respectfully,

Matt & Rachel Ness