

SALLY McCRAVEY  
PHILIP M. HENRY

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November 6, 2011

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

Dear Sir or Madam:

Where do we go to get our lives back? How is it possible, or even legal for the Corps to issue a pronouncement that upends the lives of family after family without any true concern for the damage, upheaval, and uncertainty it has caused?

Contrary to the naive view of a local Corps official, the November 2010 announcement that large areas south of Fargo were slated to become a holding pond as part of the "Diversion" project effectively stole the value of the properties of residents of Oxbow, Hickson, the Bakke addition, others up and down the Red River of the North, and beyond. Yet, there has been no compensation for this "taking" and, if compensation ever comes, it may well be a decade or more in the future.

My wife and I are of ages that we should be considering what, and where, comes next for us. We love our Oxbow home. We also love Oxbow, our neighbors, and the golf course that is the heart of our community. But, I will be 66 in a week, and it is time to consider moving on to a locale with a more-benign winter climate. It is also time to begin planning for a new residence that is better suited to our likely future needs.

But, oops, we can't! No one is going to buy our house, at least not for anywhere near its pre-announcement value, and without the prospect of a full-value sale we cannot make serious plans for the rest of our lives. Compounding our situation is the fact that my wife's health—and specifically issues with arthritis—make it steadily more difficult for her to live in our 2-story house. The day likely will come, perhaps years before a buyout does, when she won't be able to live comfortably in our current home. If you intend to keep us prisoners in here, do you also plan to pay for an elevator so we can both live here comfortably for years longer than we intend?

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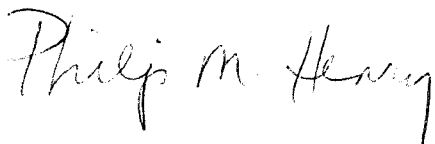
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So, some questions:

1. When will we receive a buyout? Ten, fifteen, or even twenty years simply is unacceptable, and ought to be illegal if it is not. If Fargo needs our land so badly, then let the city buy it, and soon, with funds from its own citizens.
2. What happens if, as many of us expect, the Diversion is not built? Are you prepared to compensate us for the years of our lives that you will have usurped?
3. Why won't the Corps take a short breath and consider extending the Diversion to the south to protect this area? It is my understanding that that would be less expensive than a full and proper buyout of Oxbow and the golf course alone. Do you not understand the faithful adage that haste makes waste?
4. What is the justification for handing Fargo thousands of acres, both north and south, that are now in the flood plain but, in theory, eventually will be protected. Does law and policy mean nothing to you folks? Are we so unimportant that we're worth the sacrifice?
5. What is the point of creating a diversion that will have an annual maintenance cost that equals or exceeds the cost of protecting Fargo from flooding in some years, but not all?
6. There is suspicion that the powers that be want to keep the Oxbow area inhabited as long as possible to avoid financial liability for the local Kindred School District. Ironic, isn't it, that we may need to be around to pay Kindred school taxes for as long as possible so others do not have to cover the share we pay? How neighborly!
7. I repeat, where do we go to get our lives back? Regardless of what anyone on the committee says, we are being treated like dirt.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please consider the emotional and financial turmoil you are causing. It is considerable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Philip M. Henry". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Philip M. Henry".