

F-M business leaders back diversion impact study; DNR hearing tonight

By [Dave Olson](#) on Oct 14, 2015 at 5:53 p.m.

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Tom Dawson, president of Dawson Insurance and chairman of the Business Leaders Taskforce for Permanent Flood Protection, speaks Wednesday morning at a press conference held at the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber and the taskforce support the Minnesota DNR's review of the proposed Fargo-Moorhead flood diversion project. Dave Olson/The Forum

MOORHEAD — A group of area business leaders mobilized Wednesday to underscore their continuing support for the proposed Fargo-Moorhead diversion project.

Sparking the activity was a hearing in Moorhead on Wednesday evening at which public comment was invited regarding a draft environmental impact statement prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The draft EIS shows that a diversion is needed and the finding should help pave the way for greater support of the project, said Craig Whitney, president and CEO of the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce.

Whitney spoke at a news conference Wednesday morning at the chamber headquarters, as did a number of other business leaders, including Tom Dawson, president of Dawson

Insurance and chairman of the Business Leaders Taskforce for Permanent Flood Protection.

Dawson said a diversion would protect businesses that are the driving force of the area's economy. He said the draft EIS was another indicator that any concerns some may have regarding a diversion are receiving adequate attention.

Clay Dietrich, president of the Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead and a former Moorhead assistant fire chief, said that during the flood of 2009, Moorhead's 36 firefighters had help from more than 100 firefighters from other departments along with thousands of volunteers.

"We won that fight, but we all knew that the city of Moorhead couldn't accomplish this feat year after year," Dietrich said, adding that while Moorhead has taken steps to complete its levee system and to buy out many homes that were in harm's way, the job isn't complete.

"The final piece of the puzzle is the F-M area diversion," he said.