

OPINION

## **Michael Bice, Hickson, N.D., column: Imperial Fargo erases cities from map**

By Michael Bice HICKSON, N.D. -- Who do the members of the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Study Group believe they are? Do the study group members believe they are Canada? Canada built a road along the US/Canadian border that acts as a dike. This road/dike...

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By Michael Bice

HICKSON, N.D. -- Who do the members of the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Study Group believe they are?

Do the study group members believe they are Canada? Canada built a road along the US/Canadian border that acts as a dike. This road/dike backs up water in the Red River basin.

The F-M Group wants to build a diversion that will act as a dam. This diversion/dam will back up water, flooding out southern Cass and Clay counties. The project also appears to have adverse effects in Richland and Wilkin counties.

Do the F-M Group members believe they are kings? They want to build what appears to be a moat around Fargo to protect the castle. This moat will flood out our schools, homes, land, businesses, churches and communities. These all will be sacrificed for the F-M Group.

Does the F-M Group aspire to be nothing more than a common criminal? It seems the group wants to steal our land, homes, businesses and communities. The group claims we will be compensated fairly, but these things aren't for sale. It appears the group would like to kidnap our children into the Fargo School District.

This diversion/dam has hammered our home, land and property values. It is holding us and our property hostage while the plan is on the table.

Do the F-M Group members believe they are clever politicians? They appear to have deceived Cass County voters by passing a sales tax to help issues with flooding countywide. This tax likely will help only Fargo while it actually floods out several Cass County communities that never have flooded.

I suspect the group knew of this before the sales tax vote but did not share this information until after the vote.

In short, I am not sure who the members Fargo-Moorhead Metro Study Group believe they are. It does appear the group is acting in only Fargo's interests. Their plan is called the Locally Preferred Plan; the Fargo Preferred Plan would be a more accurate name.

The plan will affect many others besides Fargo, but few of them will have any say in the matter. For example, this diversion/dam will help Fargo but will do so while destroying the North Dakota communities of Hickson, Oxbow, Bakke Addition, the Kindred (N.D.) School District, the Minnesota city of Comstock, businesses in both states and many family farms.

The diversion/dam also could hurt Christine, N.D., Richland County, N.D., and the Richland School District.

The shocking part is that all of these communities had little to no water in the past three years. The diversion/dam will put 8 feet to 9 feet of water on top of them.

Meanwhile, the cost of this diversion/dam is astronomical at \$1.7 billion. I believe it will be far more expensive. There will also be \$3.7 million in maintenance costs every year whether the facility is used or not.

Where will the money come from? The 1 cent sales tax cannot cover more than \$2 billion. Fargo and Cass County likely will have to increase the tax to make up the shortfall; plus, there will be assessments that they haven't mentioned yet.

Do the people in Horace, N.D., and West Fargo, N.D., realize they'll likely be assessed costs for this project? They both already are protected to a level beyond the 2009 flood.

And why is Fargo looking for 500 year (.02 percent chance) flood protection? The highest currently on record is a 50-year flood. We unfortunately have a far better chance of being hit by a tornado.

I live in Bakke Addition, own a business in Hickson and have two kids who attend the Kindred School. I never have sandbagged my home or business because they never have flooded.

I am from North Dakota in the U.S. Where are you from, F-M Metro Study Group members? You are not from Canada. You are not kings. You don't appear to be clever politicians. Let's hope you truly don't want to be criminals either.

In North Dakota, we respect our neighbor, don't live by deception and help each other. Step back, take some time, and come up with a plan that helps the entire Red River Valley basin.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should work for all of us, not just Fargo. The rest of us like our homes, schools and communities, too.

Bice owns the Knickerbocker Liquor Locker in Hickson.

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