

Public Officials Oppose New Madrid Levee

St. John's/New Madrid Levee Project Puts Missouri, Illinois, and Kentucky Riverside Communities at Greater Risk of Flooding

The New Madrid Floodway is the last place in Missouri where the Mississippi River can reach its natural floodplain, an important connection that filters pollution, absorbs floodwaters, and sustains fish and wildlife habitat. The St. John's Bayou-New Madrid Floodway project would block a 1,500 foot gap at the bottom of the floodway, severing this connection and impacting 50,000 acres of wetlands while exposing communities to greater flood risk. Here is what public officials have to say about the project to Members of Congress and the Obama Administration:

"I urge you to do everything you can to ensure that this project is stopped for good and that the basic safety needs of Alexander County, the City of Cairo, and surrounding communities are prioritized over a levee closure to benefit a few wealthy landowners."

–2012 letter from Michael Caldwell, Chairman, Alexander County Board of Commissioners

"In a time of major fiscal challenges, to throw \$200 million at a project that has generated much conflict and controversy, one that does nothing to promote the security of Southern Illinois families, is absolutely ill conceived."

– 2012 letter from Gary Forby, IL State Senator, 59th District

"This federally funded Corps of Engineers project jeopardizes the safety of our community by increasing our risk of catastrophic flooding."

–2012 letter from Monte Russell Chairman of Pulaski County Board of Commissioners

"This project deviates from the corps' duty to protect the interest of all Americans."

– 2012 letter from Brandon Phelps, IL State Representative 118th District

"The St. Johns/New Madrid project includes construction of a new 60-foot high, ¼ mile long levee that will eliminate vital existing flood protection by preventing the Mississippi River from overflowing into a natural backwater area during flood events."

– 2012 letter from Van Newberry, McCracken County Judge Executive

"Federal investments in this region must recognize the 'flood protection safety net' that the New Madrid Floodway provides for our community and others in Illinois, Missouri, and Kentucky."

– 2012 letter from Tyrone Coleman, Mayor, City of Cairo, IL

"Use of the New Madrid Floodway saved our community from catastrophic flooding during last spring's flooding along the Mississippi River."

– 2012 letter from Wayman A. Butler, Jr. Mayor City of Mounds, IL

"The US Fish and Wildlife Service have concluded that the project 'would cause substantial, irretrievable losses of nationally significant fish and wildlife resources, and greatly diminish rare and unique habitats in southeast Missouri.'"

– 2012 letter from David Willis, Chairman, Len Small Drainage & Levee District

"This project would trade away our town's safety to allow large landowners to intensify agricultural production and development behind the new levee, within the New Madrid Floodway in Missouri."

– June 26, 2012 letter from David Willis, Chairman, Len Small Drainage & Levee District

"Future federal flood damage reduction investments in the region should instead focus on protecting people and recognize the critical value and function of the New Madrid Floodway in doing just that."

– 2012 letter from Sam Johnson, Mayor, Mound City, IL