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CITY OF CAIRO

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May 12, 2011

**The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510**

Dear Senator Durbin:

We in Cairo are still under a mandatory evacuation order. Ongoing problems are sand boils and sink holes. They are still popping up and will continue to as the river lowers. Our levees are experiencing an unprecedented amount of pressure over an extended amount of time due to both the height of the rivers and the amount of time the water is pressing against the levees. No one knows what might occur and our citizens are very worried.

Adding to the anxiety are concerns over our pumping stations. According to the Corps of Engineers they are old and outdated. Some of the pumps do not run. We have been advised by the Corps that they need to be replaced and an initial estimate to do so would be four and one half million dollars. After the rivers recede here the Corps is going to come in and do an in depth assessment as to what needs to be done and the cost. We understand that Congress may be working on a bill to provide relief to those that lost so much during this historic flood. We respectfully request that you do everything you can to ensure a provision of any relief package that would secure funding to replace our pumps and pump stations. It is literally a matter of life and death to our citizens.

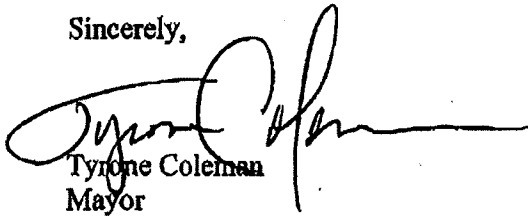
Cairo is not destroyed thanks to the use of the New Madrid floodway, but our old sewers and infrastructure are greatly compromised. Use of the floodway was critical to sparing Cairo, and other towns from catastrophic flooding. Future development in the region should recognize the critical value and function of the New Madrid Floodway. Any projects that would discourage the Floodway's use by encouraging more economic development and agriculture in the floodway must be strongly resisted.

The proposed St. Johns/New Madrid Floodway project is such a project that would encourage more development in the floodway. The proposed project would close the 1500 foot gap at the bottom of the floodway, preventing the river from backing into the floodway. This drying of the land will encourage agricultural interest to intensify production and increase economic assets vulnerable to future flooding, and therefore put more political pressure on the Corps not to use the floodway.

Unfortunately, we understand the Corps is working on yet another Environmental Impact Statement to build the St. Johns/New Madrid Floodway project. We would like to urge you, Senator Durbin, to do everything you can to ensure the gap remains open. The safety of our communities depends on the use of the floodway.

We sincerely thank you for your attention to these important matters. We hope you can help the City of Cairo shore up its' flood protection by providing needed resources for new pumps, while helping to stop projects in the region which would discourage the use of the very floodway which saved our town from destruction.

Sincerely,



Tyrone Coleman
Mayor
City of Cairo