Prepared Testimony of Jeff Dooley, Manager, Dakota Dunes Community Improvement District for Senate EPW Hearing on 2011 Floods

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The Missouri River corridor experienced extreme flooding during the summer of 2011. The flooding was created by unprecedented releases from all the Dams along the Missouri River Basins operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Previous record releases were more than doubled for an extended period of time – from Memorial Day through late August early September. To put it into perspective, the previous record release from Gavin's Point (the southernmost dam) was 70,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). The releases from Gavin's Point Dam, which is the last Dam on the Missouri River System reached peak 160,000 cfs and those releases were sustained for more than a month before they were gradually decreased. This created a 500 year flood event for much of the Missouri River Corridor from Memorial Day through mid to late August.

The Corps has indicated that these high flows were a result of above average snow back in Wyoming and Montana, later snow melt than unusual and above average rains in the upper Missouri Basin (Wyoming and Montana). The Corp acknowledged as early as early January 2011, that the snow pack that feeds the Missouri River was 16 percent above normal. As late as May 10, the Corps indicated to me that, assuming normal runoff moving forward the reservoir system could be managed by slightly above normal releases. However, large amounts of rain in May created a crisis situation. On or about Tuesday, May 24th, the Corps announced releases would go as high as 85,000 cfs. Over the course of the next 7 to 10 days, the Corps announced ever increasing and unprecedented releases from Gavin's Point (along with all other damns on the Missouri). The 85,000 cfs went to 110,000 cfs then to 130,000 cfs then 150,000 and ultimately reached 160,000 cfs. These extreme, rapidly changing and short notice releases made it very difficult to prepare preventive measures and to get people out of harms way.

My name is Jeff Dooley and I am the Manager of the Dakota Dunes Community Improvement District, which is the local government in Dakota Dunes. Dakota Dunes is a small community (population 2,700) on the extreme southeastern corner of South Dakota. As allot of other communities along the River, Dakota Dunes took extreme preventive measures to save infrastructure, property and lives. As of October 14, 2011, Dakota Dunes has had to spend over $12 million in temporary levee construction, levee maintenance storm and sanitary sewer plugging, and pumping not to mention the removal of levees, the repairing of street, sewers and other infrastructure. We still have not fully recovered from the damage created by these unprecedented releases.

In addition to the cost of the preventive measures, more than 450 homes in Dakota Dunes had to be evacuated for the summer. While we were successful in maintaining the levee system

and keep the river from running through our community, ground water caused by the releases caused untold amount of damage within our community and forced people from their homes.

When you live along a river you can expect some flooding, but when that river is controlled by a series of damns operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers, you might expect a little less extremity. It has been indicated that these extreme releases were due to series of natural occruances over the course of 2010 and 2011, but to have to exceed the previous record by 128 percent and have to maintain this flow for two to three months, seems beyond the margin of error that should be allowable.

I am extremely concerned with how the Corps models their release schedule, the priorities under which they are expected to operate within the Corps Operating Manual for the Missouri River System and the data they use for their models and projections. Are they using the most updated topographical information, river cross sections and weather information?

The summer of 2011 will be ingrained in the memory of everyone who lives, works or farms along the Missouri River. This event (500 year event) has changed people's lives forever. Due to good fortune and the protective measures we undertook, my personal property was not damaged by the flood. But, as the Manager of the community I had to witness the distress caused by this event as my friends and neighbors were asked to leave their homes behind. This cannot happen again. We need to find out if and why these extreme releases were necessary and recognize or admit what could or should have been done to prevent it. Again, in a controlled river system there has to be an expected margin of error, but this year's releases far exceeded any reasonable expectation of those margins.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffery D. Dooley, Manager
Dakota Dunes Community Improvement district

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