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ON INTELLIGENCE

May 1, 2012

Major Gen. Meredith W.B. Temple
Acting Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear General Temple:

Over the course of the last year, we have learned many lessons by the intentional levee breaches at Birds Point. We must work to make sure the events leading up to and following the Birds Point Levee breaches help us understand how to prevent such a disaster in the future and how to be more prepared if it does happen.

The Mississippi River is critical not only to the identity, culture, and economy of the communities along the river, but also to the entire region. Restoring the river and flood control protection are integral first steps to instilling confidence and reviving a community impacted by disaster. After a year, it is simply unacceptable that full restoration still remains months away.

A year after the activation of the Birds Point-New Madrid floodway, the decision continues to have a daily impact on the lives of Missourians. Job creators who fuel the local economies remain unable to return to normal until we fully restore the levee's full protection that safeguards the farm land, local businesses, and vital transportation infrastructure.

In the future, it must be the priority to update river policy and infrastructure to account for lessons learned and the need to focus resources on flood control. We must also include assurances that any damage to the flood control system will be expeditiously strengthened and rebuilt after a disaster.

The US Army Corps of Engineers must start to plan more aggressively for disasters and rebuilding efforts. For the Birds Point Levee system, this means not only planning for activation of the spillway with infrastructure that will allow for natural overtopping, but also for its restoration. The government has always been and must continue to be there to restore what was lost and rebuild stronger.

Flood protection for people and property should always be the primary goal in river policy. It's unacceptable for the Corps' annual budget to put more emphasis on land acquisition than on flood protection. This funding is critical to restore and strengthen flood control infrastructure and to safeguard communities affected by last year's disaster events.

Thank you for your consideration of this important ongoing matter. We look forward to continuing to work with the Corps on recovery, restoration, and planning for more effective flood protection in the future.

Sincere Regards,



Senator Roy Blunt

Cc: The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary for Civil Works