



**Kevin P. Mainord, Mayor**  
**Lonnie Thurmond, City Administrator**

4/11/2016

Public Hearing aboard Motor Vessel Mississippi, Cairo, IL.

Major General Wehr, Col. Anderson, Members of the MRC,  
Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Gallery.

This morning I am honored to be before you to voice my full support for the St. Johns Flood Control Project. For those that have worked so tirelessly to bring this project to fruition, thank you!

As Mayor of the City of East Prairie, and a member of St. Johns Levee Board, I stand in complete support of the proposed project to close the "Gap" and to finally install the much needed pumping station in the St. Johns Bayou Basin. This project will save the City of East Prairie, countless County residents and farmers, along with vital infrastructure, from continual back water flooding.

I am astonished and perplexed that this morning we are still being called upon to voice our support for a project that was authorized by Congress some 61 year ago, with an initial cost estimate of \$1,556,000. In 1983 the cost estimate for the project ballooned to \$112,000,000; and as currently proposed has increased to over \$164,000,000.

Over 2500 acres have been taken off the Counties' property tax rolls for mitigating purposes to appease environmental concerns so that this project might go forward

The wording and the mention in the EIS of saving the “golden top minnow,” mussels, and shorebirds is admirable. Reforesting the area around Big Oak State Park, which now only exist in its original greatness in our older generations memories, is great. Along with the “moist soil units” and “modified borrow pits” to benefit flood plain fish. And don’t forget the Appendix in the EIS that goes into great detail about how we will spend millions on Waterfowl, Fisheries, Shorebirds, Mussels, terrestrial wildlife, (whatever that is); and also the very important Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report.

Might I ask one question: Where do we spend time depicting the Impact to Human Beings of the area that have endured year after year of back water flooding and the economic loss to farmers that have lost crops due to continual back water flooding. High value crops cannot be planted in many areas of the floodway or in the St. Johns Basin because of the potential for back water flooding.

Where is the mention of the emotional stress to residents that have their homes at risk of flooding? In 2011, as in several other historic flood years, the City of East Prairie was just inches away from going completely under water because of back water flooding from St. Johns, and major arteries cut off residents and presented hardship to businesses. And this continues year after year.

It makes my blood boil when I hear our opponents refer to the landowners and farmers in the Project area as “Wealthy and influential”. Our farmers and landowners risk their own capital every year to plant and provide the calories that feed those people and their families that so commonly rail against us in the media.

In the three county area that the projects would protect with the levee closure and pumping station, there is over \$342,000 million market value added by agriculture. There are over 34,000 residents. In the 2011 flood there was over \$11,500,000 million in losses in the St. Johns Basin alone. The revenue contributed by the acres in the Floodway is over \$90 million dollars per year with contributions of over \$12 million in labor income to County residents alone. The two areas protected by this project can annually feed over 4.5 million people with the calories they produce from the land. With the world's population projected to grow by another 2.3 billion people by 2030, where do our opponents propose that their food come from?

I understand that in today's political climate, the Corp is forced to consider all aspects of any proposed project. But what the Hell happened to "flood control" being the driving force behind any project. And why can't human beings and the protection of property have as much economic weight and impact toward a project as the "golden top minnow" and mussels. Somewhere along the way we have lost our sense of priorities. We have let environmental whackos and activists on the bench determine what is best for our lives and livelihood and I for one am tired of it.

This project is long overdue, to be exact it is 61 years overdue. It is time for those that help feed the world to be afforded the same level of flood protection that those in St. Louis are afforded!

Thank You.

*Kevin P. Mainord*

Kevin P. Mainord, Mayor, East Prairie, MO.  
Member, St. Johns Levee and Drainage District.