

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 10, 2012

Brigadier General John McMahon  
Commander and Division Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Northwestern Division  
1125 NW Couch Street  
Portland, OR 97209

Dear General McMahon:

I am writing regarding the Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) authority to update release schedules for water management along the Missouri River, and the importance of keeping stakeholders along the River apprised of the flood control situation throughout this runoff season. I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Due in part to record snowmelt and historic rainfall, the unprecedented flooding event of 2011 dislocated thousands of residents up and down the Missouri River, and resulted in more than \$2 billion in damage. This event caused stakeholders to question the Corps' authority under the Missouri River Mainstem System Master Water Control Manual (Master Manual) to make decisions about the storage and release of water in upstream reservoirs.

In light of the confusion surrounding last year's flooding event, I respectfully request you consider and respond to the following questions:

1. While the Master Manual outlines the broad principles and objectives of system operation for the Missouri River, how is real time regulation of the River carried out on a day-to-day basis?
2. Does the Corps currently have authority, under the Master Manual, to make decisions about releases from upstream reservoirs on a daily or weekly, versus monthly, basis, or is legislative action from Congress needed to allow for more timely management?
3. Has the Corps established a coordinated method of updating stakeholders on decisions and assessments of the runoff situation moving forward?
4. If the Corps were to prioritize downstream flooding along the Missouri River system over other water management concerns, what effects would this have on all other authorized purposes, especially in more temperate or dry years in the basin?
5. Given the extraordinary nature of conditions which led to the events, is it possible we could expect an inverse situation, or drought, in only a few years?

I appreciate the Corps's efforts to examine carefully the events of last year to determine what improvements can be made to how the system is managed moving forward. I want to once again emphasize the importance of reaching out to stakeholders along the River when it comes to Corps decisions impacting their daily lives, and the necessity of making decisions on a timelier basis.

Once again, I appreciate your consideration when it comes to water management along the Missouri River, and welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues at length at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



ADRIAN SMITH  
Member of Congress

AMS/am