

JASON SMITH
8TH DISTRICT, MISSOURI

**COMMITTEE ON
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**COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES**

PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL
REGULATION SUBCOMMITTEE

WATER AND POWER SUBCOMMITTEE

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

I write to you today to re-emphasize the importance of finally completing the St. John's Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project, and to urge you to resist any requests to use an EPA "clean water act veto" on this project. The United States Congress directed the Corps of Engineers to protect the New Madrid Floodway and St. John Bayou Basin in 1954 – 60 years ago. The people of Southeast Missouri have waited long enough for this project – we do not appreciate being held hostage by a radical environmentalist agenda.

I recently reviewed several letters that were written to you yesterday by "local leaders" who "oppose the New Madrid Levee." The vast majority of these "local leaders" do not live in the affected area, or are not from Missouri. The "local leaders" that are from Missouri all appear to be from the Kansas City Area, and are certainly not from the Southeast Missouri Bootheel.

I have appreciated the recent efforts of the Corps of Engineers to move this project forward as expeditiously as possible. Since the comment period ended in November of 2013, the Corps has been working to review the numerous issues that were raised, and to deal with the over 21,000 communications that they received.

I have been vocal in the past about my concerns that this project as envisioned was too generous to "wildlife conservation" and "habitat protection" – while everyone can appreciate common-sense conservation, I hope we can all agree that saving human lives and property should be of a higher concern. To that point, it has been determined that finishing the St. John's Bayou and New Madrid Floodway project will provide twice the economic benefit that it costs to construct. The project's benefits of providing economic growth, protecting private property, and saving lives should be given the highest considerations.

I ask that you not interfere by derailing this project that has finally begun to show some momentum. Concerns from individuals in Southern Illinois who believe that somehow this project will endanger them with flooding are unfounded and not based in science. The Corps of Engineers has repeatedly determined that this project creates no additional risk of flooding to upstream or downstream communities.

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This project would do so much to improve the quality of life for the residents in the project area as well as surrounding communities. It should not continue to be stopped by individuals and groups that do not represent, and are not from, the affected area. For decades these groups have claimed that the project would only provide protection to farmland. This project would provide much needed protection for not only the cities of East Prairie and New Madrid, but countless homes and businesses. It would also protect Interstate 55, a critical transportation and shipping artery, during high water events.

This project has been fully vetted by the Corps of Engineers and all of the environmental concerns have been addressed time and again. To use an EPA "Clean Water Act Veto" at this juncture would be improper, and an insult to the process and all of the work undertaken by the individuals who have worked so diligently to get it to this point.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Smith". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, thin tail that extends downwards and to the left.

JASON SMITH
Member of Congress