



In Iowa's Interest: Protecting Western Iowa from Damaging Floods

by Senator Tom Harkin

For Iowa residents living along the Missouri River, this summer has been challenging. Iowans, along with local and federal officials, have been working day and night to help hold back rising flood waters. Keeping Iowans safe during this time and ensuring that the levees hold for the coming months is vitally important to the well-being of my constituents in this area. The flood damage that continues across the Midwest demonstrates how alarming rising water levels can be for local citizens.

This is why I expressed my concern to the White House during my visit to Western Iowa. I called the White House twice on June 28th to encourage President Obama to issue a federal declaration to help the people of Western Iowa. President Obama made the federal declaration later the same day, which guarantees that FEMA will match 75 percent of the flood recovery efforts. This federal declaration will provide the financial boost that the counties of Woodbury, Monona, Harrison, Pottawattamie, Mills and Fremont need. This declaration validates the dedication of the Army Corps of Engineers, who have worked tirelessly to ensure the levees resist the mounting water pressure from Sioux City all the way down to Hamburg. And I will urge the President to approve the Governor's request for individual assistance when that request is submitted.

In addition, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack issued a USDA disaster designation for Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Pottawattamie, and Woodbury Counties to provide funds from USDA programs including emergency loans, and Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) to assist in recovery from loss of crops and damage to farmland, livestock facilities and buildings. Cass, Cherokee, Crawford, Ida, Montgomery, Page, Plymouth and Shelby counties were named as contiguous counties also eligible for disaster assistance.

While spending the day with Col. Ruch and the Army Corps of Engineers, they assured me they were checking the levees every six hours while continuing to add buttressing to the structures. Their work – alongside state and local leaders – reminds me of how resilient the people of Iowa are and how much they care about our great state.

It is important that the people living along the River continue to listen to the local officials' warnings, lend their fellow neighbors a hand and band together like they have done time and time again during difficult times.

For more information on local resources for those affected by the recent flooding, feel free to contact my Sioux City office at (712) 252-7104 or visit my website at <http://harkin.senate.gov>. It provides valuable information concerning volunteer opportunities, disaster management, a flood guide and the contact information for all of my offices.