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August 16, 2005

The Honorable John Paul Woodley, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Army - Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Secretary Woodley:

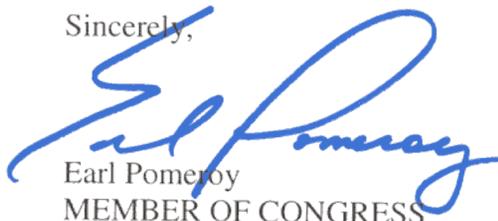
I am writing in response to the recent request by Missouri Governor Matt Blunt to increase Missouri River levels in downstream states to support commercial navigation. In light of the record low water levels and urgent drinking water needs in upstream communities, I urge you to reject Gov. Blunt's request to release additional water downstream.

North Dakota has experienced a five-year drought with water levels at Lake Sakakawea and Lake Oahe reaching their lowest point since the creation of the Garrison project – including the drought of the late 1980s. As a result of these serious drought conditions, the vital drinking water supplies in the communities of Parshall, Garrison, and Fort Yates have been severely threatened. These communities' water systems will again be placed in jeopardy should further releases occur while a significant recreation industry will continue to be impacted. Certainly, no one wants to see a repeat of the disastrous water loss that occurred in Fort Yates in 2003, and releasing additional water for commercial navigational purposes dramatically increases that risk.

Releasing additional water from the reservoirs can also lead to the unintended consequences of a navigational preclude, especially if precipitation remains low over the winter. Such a result would find both upstream and downstream communities desperately in need of water resources.

I strongly urge you to help maintain water levels in Lake Sakakawea and other upstream reservoirs so that much needed drinking water systems do not take a back seat to commercial navigation.

Sincerely,



Earl Pomeroy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

EP: mr