United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2011

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
Ranking Republican Member
United States Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe:

We write to request a hearing of the Environment and Public Works Committee regarding the flooding of the Missouri River this year.

As you know, the historic flooding of the Missouri River is having a tremendous impact on our constituents and is not expected to recede for a few months. Throughout our states, citizens face tremendous disruption to their lives as their homes are flooded, their businesses shuttered, their roads are washed-out, and their livelihoods are threatened. This is also creating a tremendous strain on state and local governments which must deal with not only many of the costs of flood prevention and public safety, but also with depressed tax receipts as tourism, farming, and other business activities are negatively impacted.

While we are all currently working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, and other state and local entities to prevent damage and prepare for recovery, we will, after the waters recede, need to understand the causes of this flood and what we can do to prevent it from happening again. Many of our constituents have serious concerns about the management of water levels in the lead up to this unprecedented flood event as well as the timeliness of the warnings given to individuals, businesses, and state and local governments that a flood would occur. We believe this hearing should address the causes of this flooding, the Corps' response and management of the dams, whether or not the Master Manual used by the Corps impacted flood protection efforts, a full accounting of the costs of the flooding, and what actions are needed to lessen the likelihood and limit the damages of another flood of this magnitude in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues and stand ready to participate in such a hearing at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Ex Benjamin Nelson

Tom Harkin

Kent Conrad

Cathy McCaskill

Chuck Grassley

Jim Johnson

Pat Roberts

Jerry Moran

Roy Blunt

John Hoeven

Jon Tester

Max Baucus