COUNTY OF ALEXANDER
Board of Commissioners

2000 Washington Avenue **Cairo, Illinois 62914**

November 18, 2013

United States Army Corps of Engineers
ATTN:PM-E (Koontz)
167 North Main Street
Room B-202
Memphis, TN 38103-1894

Dear Mr. Koontz:

I am enclosing letters received in opposition to the New Madrid Floodway Levee Project from residents of Alexander County, Illinois.

Sincerely,

Chalen Tatum

Chalen Tatum
Alexander County Board Member

Enc

November 15, 2013

United States Army Corps of Engineers
ATTN: PM-E (Koontz)
167 North Main Street
Room B-202
Memphis, TN 38103-1894

Dear Mr. Koontz:

I am a business owner in Alexander County, Illinois. My business was affected during the 2011 flood when the Corp of Engineers failed to follow the rules established for the Birds Point Floodway in its establishment. The Corps' two day delay in complying with criteria for 'blowing the Birds Point Levee" which was established to relieve stress on levees north and northeast of that point, brought about catastrophic flooding to my business. Southern Illinois University of Carbondale reported approximately 64 farm structures, 215 residential structures, and 15 Commercial structures were affected by the flooding in 2011 with an average depth in most structures of 2 to 3 feet. I am, therefore, expressing to you my strong opposition to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposed New Madrid Floodway Levee project ("the project"). Not only is the project misguided but it is a gross misuse of tax dollars.

More seriously, this project, as proposed, continues to place in jeopardy my safety and well-being along with that of many of the same neighboring communities and thousands of acres of highly productive farm lands flooded in 2011. Please recognize that farm land and homes in southern Illinois are just as valuable to our farmers as are the acres to farmers in Southeast Missouri and should receive the same respect as those who have come to assume a "false right" to control flood waters in the Birds Point area which continue to be earmarked as a Flood Way. Cutting off the Mississippi River from its floodplain in Missouri ignores the importance of the River's connection to the floodplain for the safety of neighboring communities, including Cairo, Metropolis, and Olive Branch in Illinois, and Paducah in Kentucky. The Mississippi River flood of 2011 showed that we need more connections between the Mississippi River and its floodplain, not fewer. These connections, which include the connection at New Madrid, provide critical relief valves during floods.

Further, history shows that constructing the New Madrid levee will make it more difficult to activate the floodway to save communities during the next big flood. The Corps' delay in 2011 caused great hardship to many Illinois residents. In 2011, Missouri sued to stop use of the floodway, and the resulting delay has been implicated in the flooding of Olive Branch, Illinois. (After the floodway was activated in 2011, water levels at Cairo dropped 2.7 feet in just 48 hours.) Before that, in 1983, a lawsuit was filed that enjoined use of the floodway until April 1984. And before that, in 1937, the National Guard had to be called in to quell armed opposition to the floodway's use.

In the draft impact statement the Corps has tried to show that the project will have little impact on flood heights. However, the Corps hasn't looked at the flood impacts of constructing the New Madrid levee on neighboring communities in almost twenty-five years. The only study it carried out on this was completed in 1989. Further, that outdated study used a 1950s era physical model to estimate the increase in water levels. The Corps needs to analyze the project's flood impacts using a modern model with modern data before it places neighboring communities in harms way.

The New Madrid Levee project threatens to put me and my neighbors in jeopardy. I urge the Corps to abandon its efforts to build the New Madrid Levee.

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November 19, 2013

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November 17, 2013

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November 14, 2013

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November 20, 2013

United States Army Corps of Engineers
ATTN: PM-E (Koontz)
167 North Main Street
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The New Madrid Levee project threatens to put me and my neighbors in jeopardy. I urge the Corps to abandon its efforts to build the New Madrid Levee.

November 18, 2013

United States Army Corps of Engineers
ATTN: PM-E (Koontz)
167 North Main Street
Room B-202
Memphis, TN 38103-1894

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