



CITY OF METROPOLIS

BILLY McDANIEL, MAYOR

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July 25, 2016

As the Mayor of Metropolis, a city in southern Illinois that sits on the Ohio River just upstream from its confluence with the Mississippi River, I write to voice my opposition to the St Johns New Madrid project, and to enlist your help in saving our city and others like it in Illinois, Missouri, and Kentucky from devastating floods like the flood of 2011.

Prior to the breaching of the Birds Point Levee, 239 homes located within the City of Metropolis were directly impacted by flooding. Over a dozen businesses located in Metropolis were either closed or had their operations affected by high water. In addition to the loss of revenue to our local and spin-off business, the loss to the City alone was in excess of \$320,000. When flood fighting and clean-up costs are added, the economic impact to the City approached \$1.4 million dollars.

If the USACE had not opened the Birds Point levee when it did, based on the National Weather Service forecast at the time, over 2,100 homes would have been flooded, almost 5,000 residents would be displaced, the waste water treatment plant would be non-operational, both electrical substations that provide power to the City would be under water, and there would be no routes into or out of the City of Metropolis to replenish food, fuel, and emergency services. Based on that information, I had no choice but to issue a voluntary evacuation order for the residents of the City of Metropolis. If the forecast had become a reality, the cost to replace the homes, businesses, and infrastructure would be in the 10's of millions of dollars.

Even after the Birds Point levee was breached and the Mississippi River began to recede, the water levels in Metropolis continued to rise. This rise was in response to the Tennessee Valley Authority releasing record amounts of water from the Kentucky and Barkley Dams. Any additional rainfall would have required massive amounts of water being released from those two dams. The City of Metropolis could not survive being inundated with any more water at that time.

Of the 6,334 residents of Metropolis, 23.5% have income below the poverty level. Placing our residents at greater risk of harm and loss, the project would do a great injustice to disadvantaged communities already harmed by unnecessary flooding.

I understand that the opponents of this project are many and the supporters are few. The environmental justice implications of the project are real and they are significant. The \$165 million price tag on this project would amount to a huge tax payer subsidy for a small number of landowners at the expense of the lives and livelihoods of thousands. The Obama Administration cannot stand by while this project goes forward. We need to put an end to this ill-conceived idea and to stop the project once-and-for-all. For the people of Metropolis, I call upon EPA to exercise its authority under Section 404 (c) of the Clean Water Act and veto the St John's Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project.

Sincerely,

William McDaniel, Mayor
City of Metropolis