

To: Jeff Nelson

From: Bob Werkhoven, Valley City Mayor

Senator Fischer and Water Topics Committee members, we are pleased that you are willing to listen to the concerns of those of us downstream on the Sheyenne River have, regarding potential impacts of Devils Lake drainage and excess water issues we are currently experiencing.

Commissioner Pedersen has chaired a committee that has been working on permanent flood control for about a year and has some costs and visuals he will go over with you.

We would like to reiterate some of the concerns we (Valley City, Ft. Ransom and Lisbon) have regarding the Devils Lake issue. The Sheyenne River and basin, it appears, including entities along its banks, are going to be the hydraulic conveyance that is going to restore inundated land in the Devils Lake basin, or will be impacted by the restoration of inundated land. It seems the Sheyenne River is going to be a huge part of the solution to the Devils Lake problem. It's about time, in our opinion, that some funding be allocated towards downstream mitigation as has been and is being done in the Devils Lake area.

Downstream entities also continue to fight high water periodically in the Sheyenne River, to the point that we are uncertain of the erosion that is occurring and has occurred to our river banks, and what that erosion is doing to the integrity and stability of the river banks up and down the Sheyenne River. What potential impact that may have on commercial buildings and homes along the river is unknown. There is no room to place sandbags or clay dikes between structures and the riverbank in many areas. Commissioner Pedersen has some pictures of that in his presentation. I might add that when we were removing Hesco bags after the water subsided this spring, we noticed in a couple of areas that the bags were leaning toward the river channel, which would indicate some cavitations or instability of the bank, and had it failed, we would have had a breach in the dike system.

Water is having a negative impact on the infrastructure of the three downstream communities and continues to flood highly productive farmland annually. At even minor stage, flooding Valley City loses 30% of its storm sewer capacity which would ideally require three additional lift stations. Without controls, the planned emergency outlet at the Tolna Coulee and the gravity flow out of Stump Lane will put downstream entities in a precarious, vulnerable situation during spring flooding on the Sheyenne. If Stump Lake overflows, there is a potential for 3,000 cfs or more flowing into the Sheyenne. There needs to be some kind of control, such as replacing drop logs particularly during our spring flood season in the operations of the emergency outlet on the Tolna Coulee.

Permanent dikes continue to be built in the Devils Lake region. But there is no plan for permanent flood protection or buyout funding for downstream entities, or compensation for potential higher water treatment costs which are estimated to be between \$57,000 and potentially \$130,000 per year. With the additional gravity flow outlet at Stump Lake and the east end outlet, we have gone from anticipating treating water with sulfate content of 500 ppm to 600 ppm to perhaps quadrupling that number to around 2200 to 2500 ppm. It seems the water being

transferred by the water transfer rule should be a little more comparable from a chemical standpoint.

We continue to blame the Devils Lake problem in part on the wet cycle, a wet cycle that does not stop in the Devils Lake Basin, but is being experienced statewide, including the Sheyenne Basin. We build dikes and take them down. Erosion is becoming a huge problem. Stopping erosion may require driving sheet piling in areas where soils are vulnerable to erosion.

Dikes go up fast because of the urgency at that time, but removal is the difficult part because the damage shows up then, requiring costly repairs and angry property owners. This anger caused by dike construction which damages yards etc. continues to take place with increased regularity. Our concern for Valley City, Ft. Ransom and Libson is that our system of containment will fail at some point when we get an unexpected storm during high river levels and a river bank cave-in, in causing either a back-up of water, over-topping a dike and a breach of a levy or a jetty action, or having the dike cave in along with a building allowing water into the city through a dike breach.. The river channel of the Sheyenne is simply not large enough to accommodate anticipated increased flows at this point. We don't want to be another Minot.

All three cities mentioned have run out of money due to the frequency of flooding this wet cycle, and have had their economies negatively impacted because of high water events the past few years. One of Valley Cities important industries lost production days because some of their employees had to protect their homes or had difficulty getting to work (bridges closed, rural road washed out) not to mention school days lost by high school and college students whose help sandbagging was critical in our successful flood fight over the past few years. Valley City, Ft. Ransom and Lisbon need financial assistance for buy-outs and permanent flood protection.

We are well aware of the problems in the Devils Lake basin, but we think downstream problems caused by the same water threatening the Devils Lake basin also threatens the Sheyenne Basin and qualifies for financial aid through a mitigation program, a program that we need to expedite. We want to avoid a disaster and hope it doesn't take a disaster to implement a remedy to our water problems.