

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 16

WHEREAS, in the year 2011, heavy rainfall and snowmelt along the Missouri River combined with intentional releases of impounded water by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers caused unprecedented amounts of water flow on the river, which led to breached levees and widespread flooding for the states along the river, including Missouri; and

WHEREAS, the extensive flooding destroyed many homes, farms, and businesses, severely impacting the livelihoods of thousands of Missourians, who, in addition to suffering the emotional toll of the disaster, are also suffering a heavy economic burden to repair the devastated land and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is charged with management of the Missouri River for eight congressionally-authorized purposes, one of which is flood control; and

WHEREAS, the Army Corps of Engineers has worked extensively for numerous years to develop the Missouri River Master Manual to guide its management of the river which seeks to balance the competing interests of the eight authorized purposes; and

WHEREAS, it is evident that due to the immediate, large-scale and potentially life-threatening impacts upon public health and safety caused by flooding, the authorized purpose of flood control must have the utmost importance in any planning activities on the part of the Army Corps; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the widespread devastation caused by the flood events of 2011, an independent technical review panel was formed to evaluate the Army Corps' river management performance and, specifically, its performance with regard to its responsibility to protect public health and safety through flood control; and

WHEREAS, the independent technical review panel issued its findings and recommendations in December 2011 and concluded that while the Army Corps may have acted in accordance with the Master Manual, the Master Manual itself may not be appropriately flexible or responsive to adequately protect the public from flooding in the case of extreme weather events such as those experienced in 2011; and

WHEREAS, the panel's report further concluded that the Army Corps' Master Manual should not regard extreme weather events such as the precipitation in 2011 as rare, isolated events, but rather as part of a potential climatic pattern for which the Army Corps must be continuously prepared to address; and

WHEREAS, understanding that the prediction of future weather patterns is not an exact science, the Army Corps must allow greater flexibility in its management activities of reservoir storage and spring rise to anticipate and respond to higher than expected snow and rainfall in the river basin so as to prevent future catastrophic flooding events like that which occurred in 2011 and to position the Army Corps to be successful in accomplishing its flood control duties and protecting the public from disasters that could have been prevented:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-sixth General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby urge the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to accept the recommendations of the independent technical review panel and modify its Missouri River Master Manual so as to conduct its river management activities in proper accordance with the Corps' mandated responsibility to protect public health and safety through flood control; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers be urged to continually place the utmost priority on flood control in any future modifications to the Missouri River Master Manual and in its annual planning with the goal of allowing the Army Corps to be able to successfully react and respond to unpredictable weather and extreme weather events so as to prevent future flooding disasters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Missouri Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the members of the Missouri Congressional delegation.