

United States Senate

June 17, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500-0005

Dear Mr. President:

I write today to lend my support to the June 17, 2011, letter from Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman, requesting a disaster declaration from the federal government in response to flooding impacting communities along the Missouri and Platte River systems in Nebraska.

The forecast flood levels are the result of record releases of water from reservoirs on the upper Missouri River in Montana and North and South Dakota. The upper Missouri River basin received a year's worth of rain over the past few weeks; and snow pack runoff into the upper portion of the river is 140 percent of normal, according to the National Weather Service.

Gavins Point Dam, a dam on the South Dakota-Nebraska border close to the Missouri River, is now releasing 150,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) – more than double the prior record release of 70,000 cfs in 1997.

To date, the City of Omaha has spent at least \$1.5 million to tackle flooding concerns; and those costs are expected to grow, not only in Omaha, but throughout the state, as the water is not expected to subside until mid to late August.

Governor Heineman's request includes damage beginning on May 24, 2011, covering 17 counties. I concur with the Governor's assessment as to the severity of the disaster and the need for federal assistance and do, therefore, urge you to immediately declare a federal disaster in the Nebraska counties impacted by these rising waters and to assign the appropriate federal agencies to support repair and recovery efforts.

Mr. President, I appreciate your attention to these concerns and thank you in advance for mobilizing the resources of the federal government to help my home state of Nebraska during this time of disaster. If there is anything that I or my staff can do to be of assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or the following members of my staff, Erick Lutt at (202) 224-6551 or Dayle Williamson at (402) 441-4600.

Sincerely,



E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator

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