

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2404

February 14, 2020

Major General Richard G. Kaiser
Commander, Mississippi Valley Division
President, Mississippi River Commission
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183

Dear MG Kaiser,

I am writing to you deeply concerned about the current water levels of the Mississippi River. As of now, 7 gauges are showing major flooding, 28 gauges are showing moderate flooding, 133 gauges are showing minor flooding, and 106 gauges are near flood stage within the Mississippi watershed. This is a cause for alarm as we are only in mid-February and the high-water season is just beginning.

Last year was the longest known flood on record on the lower Mississippi River. The Bonnet Carré Spillway was used for the 13th time in its history, and the first time in consecutive years. This is the fourth time the spillway was used in a single decade - the most in its history. On May 10, 2019 and in the first time ever in its history, the Bonnet Carré Spillway was opened a second time due to excessive rainfall upriver. For the first time in the spillway's existence, it was in operation during the tropical cyclone season, as Hurricane Barry made landfall near Atchafalaya Bay. On July 27, 2019, the last bays of the Bonnet Carré Spillway were closed, ending a 79 day stretch of deployment, for a total of 123 days of use in 2019.

I urge the Army Corps of Engineers to investigate and undertake proactive water management approaches with the use of the Morganza Spillway and Old River Control Structure spillways, to avoid another record-breaking prolonged use of the Bonnet Carré Spillway. The Bonnet Carré Spillway should not be the only option for controlling the Mississippi River.

Sincerely,



Steven M. Palazzo
Member of Congress

Cc: R.D. James, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works