

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2015

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
108 Army Pentagon, Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310

The Honorable Estevan Lopez
Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Assistant Secretary Darcy and Commissioner Lopez:

We write about the recent decision of the U.S. District Court of Montana that enjoined construction at the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project and directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to provide evidence of the benefits the project would provide to species prior to proceeding with construction. We urge ACE and BOR to address the concerns of the Court and conduct the necessary analyses in a timely manner to ensure this essential source of water for farmers, ranchers, and communities throughout much of northeastern Montana and northwestern North Dakota is not unduly disrupted.

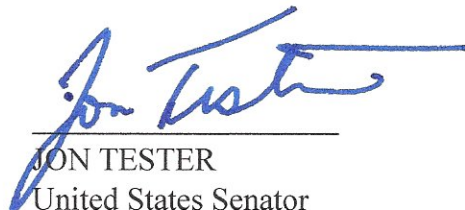
This project is critical to close to four hundred farms and irrigates over 50,000 acres of cropland, and time is of the essence as winter is approaching and inclement weather could further damage existing infrastructure. If the agencies have not already done so, we urge ACE and BOR to develop and implement an interim plan to manage the existing intake dam should the project continue to be enjoined and the lawsuit moves through the judicial process. Additionally, we encourage ACE and BOR to provide assurances to Congress and stakeholders that funding currently allocated for this project will not be transferred or reduced while ACE and BOR conduct further analyses.

As ACE and BOR move forward in addressing the issues detailed by the Court in granting the injunction, we request ACE and BOR act in as expeditious a manner as possible. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your prompt response and staying in close contact on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator



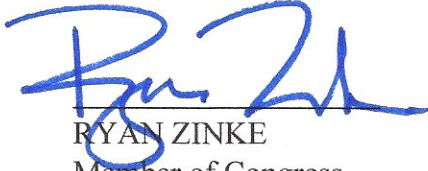
JON TESTER
United States Senator



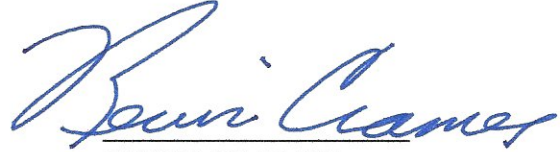
JOHN HOEVEN
United States Senator



HEIDI HEITKAMP
United States Senator



RYAN ZINKE
Member of Congress



KEVIN CRAMER
Member of Congress