



The
Minnesota State
Cattlemen's Association

P.O. Box 12 - Maple Plain, MN 55359

www.mnsca.org ▪ mnsca@mnsca.org ▪ 612-618-6619

June 23rd, 2017

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attention: Project Management
180 5th St. E., Suite 700
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1678.

Re: Draft Environmental Assessment for Mississippi River Lower Pool 4 dredged material management plan.

Dear Mr. Bob Edstrom:

We are writing to you today to express concern for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers draft environmental assessment plan for the Mississippi River Lower Pool 4 dredge material management plan that will negatively impact the future of multiple family farms, including Drysdale family farm, along with their surrounding community.

The current proposed dredge material plan intends to acquire prime agriculture land that is currently owned by multiple Minnesota family farms. These farms have been family-owned for generations and we urge you to consider the impact this plan will have on their livelihood, and the economies of surrounding communities.

In addition to the lost tax revenue for their county, the community will also suffer the loss of the economic stimulus that comes directly from livestock farmers. Minnesota's cattle and beef industry is a diverse and robust sector of our state's agricultural economy. Cattle and beef production is the second largest livestock sector in Minnesota, accounting for 27% of Minnesota's livestock cash receipts and 13% of the state's total agricultural cash receipts. Wabasha County is one of Minnesota's top 10 counties for cattle production. In our state, cattle production at the farm level has a "multiplier effect" of \$2.05 for every dollar of output. Specifically, Minnesota's beef and cattle production creates economic activities in many other economic sectors including agronomy, manufacturing, transportation, trade, services, finance, insurance, real estate, and construction. Minnesota beef production's total economic impacts at the farm level (not including meat processing) is 4.2 billion dollars and employs nearly 27,000 Minnesotans. Our rural communities simply cannot afford to lose farms and the businesses that they support; which in turn employ many people within these rural communities!

The Midwest has uniquely remained a region where livestock and crop farming still maintain a strong connection. The readily available supply of high quality feed and cattle



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has allowed diversified farmers to thrive in our region. Removing a livestock farmer's main source of feed and forages will effectively strip them of their ability to remain profitable and ability to stay in business within our region.

We would like to extend our appreciation for the public review period extension through July 14th. However, we believe that more needs to be done to ensure that every possible alternative option and location for dredge material storage has been thoroughly examined. Many practical ideas have been shared through community meetings about alternative options to removing prime farm land from production. These alternatives must be researched and pursued as the principal dredge and sand material storage locations for the Mississippi River Lower Pool 4 dredged material management plan.

Thank-you for your consideration. Please reach out with any questions or concerns you may have going forward.

Kindest Regards,

Ashley Kohls
Executive Director
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association