

Congress passes bill to aid with 2019 flood recovery

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Adrian Smith (R-NE), released the following statement after the House passed the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (H.R. 7575). Included in this legislation is language Smith developed with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to help communities which abide by certain criteria restore their eligibility for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assistance to repair damage from 2019 flooding.

Also included in this bill is language similar to the Lower Missouri Flood Prevention Program Act, which Smith helped introduce. The legislation would expand the scope of the Lower Missouri Basin study to improve flood prevention on the Missouri River from Sioux City, Iowa, and South Sioux City, Nebraska, to its confluence with the Mississippi River.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be required to study, design, and construct water resources development projects and modify existing ones to provide flood protection for communities and develop a system plan to for reducing flood risk and improving flood resiliency.

“The 2019 floods ravaged farmland, destroyed essential infrastructure like highways, water treatment plants, and levees that had withstood the test of time for decades. While touring the damage in Peru with Senator Slama and community leaders, it was clear something needed to be done. Though there is still work ahead of us, this legislation is a big step toward addressing these issues,” said Smith. Prevention is also critical to avoiding damage and destruction in communities like South Sioux City. This legislation supports ongoing local rebuilding efforts and has the potential to save towns in rural America who have previously fallen through the cracks.”

State Senator Julie Slama, whose district includes Peru, Nebraska, said the following:

“This provision would allow the Corps of Engineers to address Southeast Nebraska’s biggest infrastructure need and a top priority for my District. Congressman Smith toured Peru’s flood damage last summer, and our region is overjoyed this critical provision was added to WRDA with his help. Today’s vote represents an outstanding team effort between local stakeholders, my office, and Congressman Smith, and is a big win for Southeast Nebraska.”

Dr. Dan Hanson, President of Peru State College:

“Congressman Smith’s work to improve the WRDA bill, making the repair of the

Peru Levees eligible for Federal funding, is critical to the long-term success of Peru State College, the City of Peru, local farmers, and the entire region. The region suffered significant damage in the flood of March 2019 when the levees were breached. This damage included complete flooding of the City's water treatment plant and wastewater treatment system as well as flooding thousands of acres of farmland, causing millions of dollars of damage and economic loss. As chair of the Long-term Recovery Group for our region, I am very thankful for Congressman Smith's successful leadership, putting Peru and the region on the path to recovery."

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