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Smith Proposal to Protect Homes & Property near Mississippi River Passes U.S. House

JUNE 11TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Washington, D.C. - The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) of 2018 on Wednesday with Congressman Jason Smith's (MO-08) amendment included to protect Missouri homes and farmland residing along the Mississippi River.

“The 2011 Army Corps activation of the Birds Point Levee was one the darkest days for the families and farmers residing along the river. What’s worse, it took the Corps eighteen months to return the levees back to their original design. That is absolutely unacceptable,” said Congressman Smith. “The people of Southeast Missouri are resilient and did their best to pick up the pieces and return to their lives, but it must never happen again. My amendment makes clear the Army Corps cannot activate any floodway unless they are prepared to restore it quickly. Simply put, a levee should never even be a candidate for activation unless there is quick and clear plan to restore it. That wasn’t the case back then, but it will be now.”

In 2011 the Mississippi River experienced historic flooding and the Army Corps of Engineers detonated the Birds Point levee in Southeast Missouri. 130,000 acres of land in Southeast Missouri were flooded, destroying homes, farmland, and communities.

Wednesday the U.S. House of Representatives passed the water resources bill with Congressman Smith’s amendment included, requiring the prompt restoration and

rebuilding for any levee damaged by the Army Corps of Engineers. It was the latest example of Congressman Smith intervening with the Army Corps to better protect Missourians from flooding.

In December of 2015 constant rainfall caused the Mississippi River waters to quickly rise. Congressman Smith organized public meetings with the Army Corps so southeast Missourians could address their concerns directly to the Corps and ensure the levee wouldn't be activated again.

In October last year, Congressman Smith convinced the St. Louis Corps of Engineers to reverse their previous decision and fund a study on the cause of frequent flooding along Joachin Creek in De Soto.

Recently in March, Congressman Smith discussed the importance of advancing transportation on the Mississippi River with other federal elected officials and river industry leaders, urging modernizing and maintaining the system to protect residents.

“Many of these systems have fallen into disrepair and neglect, but fortunately President Trump understands how important it is to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure to support a growing economy,” said Congressman Smith.

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