

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 18, 2015

The Honorable Kathryn D. Sullivan, PhD  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans & Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room 5128  
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Jo - Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)  
108 Army Pentagon  
Room 3E446  
Washington, DC 20310

Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick  
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers  
Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Dr. Sullivan, Assistant Secretary Darcy, and LTG Bostick:

As the Members of Congress that represent north and central Louisiana, we are writing to express our deep concern over the recent inaccuracy of cresting predictions produced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the National Weather Service (NWS) for the Red River. Given Louisiana's geographic location along the Gulf of Mexico and within the Mississippi River Basin, communities throughout the state rely heavily on timely and accurate information from USACE and NWS on how threats from natural disasters will potentially impact life and property. Unfortunately, the recent flooding in north and central Louisiana is an example of the impact(s) that inaccurate predictions can have on life and commerce.


As you are aware, massive amounts of rain in Texas and Oklahoma have raised water levels to the point where USACE needed to release water downstream. In early June, the Corps discharged 55,000 cubic feet of water daily from Lake Texoma, OK. That water eventually ended up on the roads and in the backyards of Louisiana communities. As the water approached these communities, NWS predictions on the crest of the Red River changed seven times in thirteen days. Predictions went from a 31.5-foot crest on May 24th to a 34-foot crest on May 29th. Expectations then moved to a 35.5-foot crest on June 4th, for an additional foot on June 5th and were finally changed to 37 feet on June 7th. The seemingly constant changes in crest predictions presented significant challenges for local and state emergency managers.

In light of the information above, as well as our goal for increased transparency and accountability of federal agencies, we request answers to the following questions:

- It has come to our attention that data used to create the predictions for Red River cresting was obtained from flooding that occurred in 1990. Why did NWS and USACE use data that was 25 years old to create these hydrological models?
- Why did the predictions for Red River cresting vary from the river's real time activity?
- What remediation measures do NWS and USACE plan to implement following the inaccuracies associated with the Red River cresting predictions?
- How will NWS and USACE engage local, state, and community leaders in gathering hydrological data for future cresting predictions?

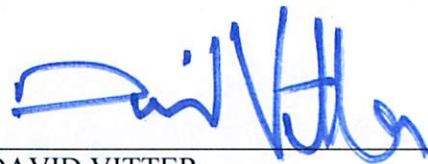
Thank you for your personal attention to this matter of importance to the people of north and central Louisiana.

Sincerely,



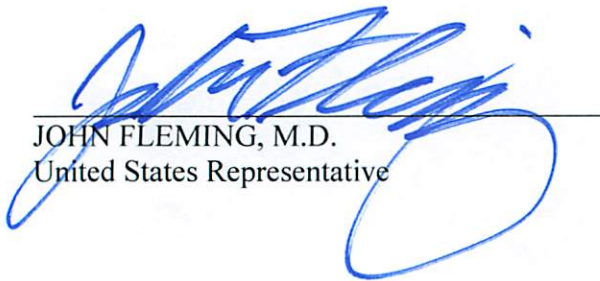
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BILL CASSIDY, M.D.  
United States Senator



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DAVID VITTER  
United States Senator



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JOHN FLEMING, M.D.  
United States Representative



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RALPH ABRAHAM, M.D.  
United States Representative