

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) today expressed her concern about river levels on the Mississippi to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

"Our local economy depends on access to the river so we can export Southern Missouri products to markets around the world. Not only is this a dangerous situation for traffic on our rivers, but it underscores the year-round importance of the river's navigation channels," Emerson said. "We feel the effects of this summer's drought in many ways, but the Corps has a responsibility to help avert the most damaging affects of the drought on commerce throughout the Midwest. I hope they proceed with all due haste to assure the navigation channels remain open and operations on the Mississippi in coming months."

The text of Emerson's letter is attached:

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy,

As you know, the 2012 drought, the worst in over 50 years, has seriously affected water levels on our nation's waterways. Commerce on the Mississippi River has slowed, reducing the flow of goods and slowing economic activity. I appreciate the Corps efforts to maintain navigation on the Mississippi River throughout this challenging time. The Corps' persistent dredging over the past months has been vital to maintain the river channel so commerce can continue, albeit at a limited pace.

I am concerned about further interruption in commerce along the Mississippi River in the near future. Water releases from the upper Missouri River are planned to be scaled back later this month to conserve water. The flow of water from Gavin's Point Dam is scheduled to be reduced to about 12,000 cubic feet per second from a regularly released flowage of up to 17,000 cubic feet per second. These reductions would seriously affect the Mississippi River water level between St. Louis and Cairo, Illinois beginning next month, further restricting barge traffic.

To prevent the interruption of commerce on the Mississippi River, I urge the Corps to expedite efforts to maintain the Mississippi channel with additional dredging and clearing of rock

pinnacles along the river if necessary. We cannot afford an interruption in navigation on the Mississippi River where 500 million tons of commerce could be jeopardized. The Mississippi River remains a vital artery of commerce connecting our farms and manufacturers to the global marketplace. We must do everything in our power to maintain this competitive advantage to support jobs and continue economic growth.

Again, I appreciate all of your efforts to prioritize commerce on the Mississippi River during this challenging time. I respectfully request your close attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

JO ANN EMERSON

Member of Congress