

**Representative Emanuel Cleaver, II Testimony before the House Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Member Day Hearing, Thursday February 27, 2020**

Good Morning and thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for holding this important hearing.

I will try to keep this short and to the point, as I have a feeling the ranking member understands the concerns I'm about to address all-too-well. The Missouri River needs your help. The Missouri River is a river system and, as we have seen over the last decade, the lower end of that system is continually holding the short end of the stick.

When the upper river experiences excess snow or rain and the reservoirs are filled to capacity, the water is released upon Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska.

When torrential rains occur in Iowa or Northern Missouri, we have no reservoirs to keep the water from overflowing banks and flooding farms, roads and towns. Most of the levees along the river in my state of Missouri are non-federal – either built locally or now maintained by local levee districts.

The system is set up so that the portion of the river least able to deal with flood events bears the heaviest burden. This cannot continue.

Last spring and summer, Missouri had two major flood events, breaching 34 levees and overtopping 65. Missourians requested \$93 million in aid after the flooding,

and the levee repairs are estimated at over \$1 billion. Over 1.4 million acres of Missouri land were reported as prevented plant.

My constituents are telling me that they are even more concerned about this year. With only 12 of the 70 levee rehab contracts underway as of February and another wet year predicted, I fear we are not prepared for a potential 2020 flood season.

The four-state stakeholders and the Army Corps of Engineers are working together on ideas for further flood mitigation efforts. The Corps has proposed a new study to evaluate what can be done for the Lower Missouri River, and I urge the Committee be open to some flexibility for this proposed study. With four states involved and hundreds of miles of river, this is not a typical 3x3 study. I hope that the Committee will be flexible with some of the typical parameters in this case.

### Stormwater

Though not always included in the House's WRDA bill, I also want to urge the committee to address the high cost of our stormwater infrastructure. In my district, Kansas City, the largest city in Missouri, is currently under a consent decree to spend \$2.5 billion to separate stormwater and wastewater systems over 25 years. Because of this, the city utility has been forced to raise water rates to over \$100 per household, which is unaffordable for most city residents. This is a critical issue for

my constituents and for many communities around the country, and something that Congress can help address.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today about the infrastructure needs of Missouri's Fifth Congressional District.