TERRY E. BRANSTAD
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KIM REYNOLDS
LT. GOVERNOR

November 3, 2011

The Honorable J. Michael Hayden
Executive Director, Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST)
5809 Sagamore Court
Lawrence, Kansas 66047

Dear Governor Hayden:

Effective today, the State of Iowa is officially withdrawing from the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST). I do not believe that MoRAST is the best avenue to pursue Iowa's interests and priorities. Rather, I believe more direct discussions with relevant local, state, and Federal partners will allow for enhanced engagement on Missouri River management and better prioritization of flood control over recreational and other uses.

The governors of the Missouri River have formed a Missouri River Working Group which has met twice to discuss the importance of elevating the focus on flood control in the management of the Missouri River. These meetings have provided an opportunity to directly interact with the US Army Corps of Engineers, other states, and relevant Federal partners to pursue solutions to the flooding challenges facing our respective states. The reprioritization of flood control is crucial in preventing a repeat of this year's devastating flood and will help mitigate the longevity and severity of future Missouri River flooding. I am encouraged by these high-level discussions and remain committed to actively participating in these important discussions about Missouri River management and the recovery work ahead.

The State of Iowa's State Interagency Missouri River Authority (SIMRA) held a public forum in Council Bluffs, which gave stakeholders another avenue to share their important perspectives on flooding impacts and River management. SIMRA's state agencies represent broad viewpoints and stakeholders in discussions on the Missouri River. SIMRA agencies have been closely coordinating with the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management team, including Brigadier General Derek Hill who is also leading the Iowa Missouri River Recovery Task Force.

At the recent MoRAST meeting in Rapids City, South Dakota, MoRAST was not responsive to the perspectives of some states, including Iowa. While seven of the eight Missouri River governors have called for a heightened focus on flood control, MoRAST did not actively pursue this goal at the recent meeting. Moreover, there have been long-standing concerns that MoRAST's by-laws are too narrowly constrained to adequately represent the diversity of key stakeholders and multiple uses of the River.

Below are just a few examples of why we must improve the focus on flood control for Missouri River management:

- Flooding caused an estimated $207 million in lost crop sales and related economic activity as over 280,000 farm acres were impacted, according to Iowa Farm Bureau estimates.
- 350 homes met FEMA's definition of destroyed or major damage.
- Hundreds of miles of Iowa roads were impacted.
- 950,000 trees could die from over-exposure to flood waters, according to Iowa Department of Natural Resources estimates.
- The flooding has severely hampered Western Iowa's economy.

Ensuring that flood control is a top priority for management of the Missouri River is necessary after this year's devastation. The negative impacts of Missouri River flooding on communities in Western Iowa were immense, and impacted Iowans deserve a fresh approach to Missouri River management.

Sincerely,

Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa