

WASHINGTON – Vice President of the United States Joe Biden yesterday complimented the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on its destruction of the Birds Point levee in three locations, resulting in the intentional obliteration of 288 residential structures, ten churches, one entire predominantly African-American community, and the flooding of 128,000 acres of Missouri farmland. According to the Associated Press, Biden told a group of reporters in St. Louis, "it is evidence that the (Army) Corps of Engineers has come up with a method along the Mississippi to be able to mitigate some of the significant damage that otherwise would have occurred."

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) responded to the Vice President's statements by saying Biden clearly doesn't understand the situation in the congressional district she represents.

"Not only has this decision by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers literally wiped an entire town off the map, it has also in the case of Mississippi County likely reduced the ag economy by some \$65 million," Emerson said. "There is a swath of destruction alongside the river, and there has thus far been no public indication by the Vice President or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that the federal government will be there for these Americans to help them rebuild and keep them safe over the long term."

Furthermore, Emerson says, there is no evidence to suggest that any reduction in Mississippi River flood stages at Birds Point last week will lead to a reduction in damage as the crest moves downstream.

"I do not know what damage the Vice President imagines was prevented by causing hundreds of millions of dollars of destruction in Southern Missouri, but I can tell you the crisis in our communities is real, it is immediate, and a comprehensive response is urgently needed," Emerson said.

Emerson said four Southern Missouri counties have been declared major federal disaster areas, but that an expansion of that designation to Scott, Stoddard, Cape Girardeau and other counties is necessary, as well as restoration of the levee sections the Corps of Engineers detonated.

"I think it is foolhardy to call any action that purposefully ruins Americans lives and livelihoods is

a sound method of dealing with any disaster," Emerson said. "The folks I represent are no less important than any other Americans suffering from the flooding along the river."