

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1803

May 11, 2011

The Honorable William J. Murphy  
Administrator  
Risk Management Agency  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Stop 0801  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Administrator Murphy:

In light of the historic flooding currently impacting the Lower Mississippi River Valley, I respectfully request that the Risk Management Agency (RMA) declare all applicable flood-related crop and seafood losses in the Atchafalaya Basin to be "unavoidable, naturally occurring events."

Considering the fact that RMA has agreed to cover the crop losses associated in the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway, it is only fair for the Agency to provide the same treatment to the famers in the Atchafalaya Basin. The same historic floodwaters that started to overtop the levees at Birds Point and New Madrid will threaten to overtop the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer control structures at Old River and the Morganza Spillway and pour into the Atchafalaya Basin, as such, I urge you to consider this a naturally occurring event.

Currently the Corps expects the Mississippi River at Red River Landing (the location of the Morganza Spillway and the dividing line between the Mississippi Valley and the Atchafalaya Basin) to crest at 65.5 feet. This is 4.2 feet higher than the all time record at this location. At this level it is doubtful that any structure can withstand this pressure and thus it is immaterial if the flooding, and resulting crop loss, is caused by the Corps' opening of the Morganza Spillway. As further proof that the expected flooding is an entirely natural event, the flood gauge at Morgan City (at the bottom of the Atchafalaya Basin) is already almost two and a half feet above flood stage and is expected to crest just one foot below the record stage.

I thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request and I thank you in advance for doing the right thing and declaring all Atchafalaya Basin crop losses as the result of a naturally occurring event.

Respectfully,



Jeff Landry  
Member of Congress