

Missouri River Flooding

As anyone who lives near a major body of water knows, flooding is a reality that must be expected and planned for. Considering the effort and funds that have been spent over the last half century to implement a sophisticated, nationwide flood management system, the recent flooding begs the question of whether the system is properly managed and, if not, what needs to be done to better handle future events. This past Thursday, I participated in a House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment hearing, examining the management of the summer 2011 Missouri River Valley flooding. This was something that I asked Chairman Mica to do when he visited Omaha last summer. At the hearing, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' dam operating procedures were evaluated, and whether the Corps' water release decisions triggered and/or intensified the flooding was investigated. It is critical that we take a hard look at the flood control activities of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Follow this link to view my testimony from this hearing.

November Unemployment Report

Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor announced that for the month of November, a net total of 120,000 jobs were created and the unemployment rate fell to 8.6 percent, partially due to 315,000 workers dropping out of the workforce. This is the 34th consecutive month our nation has faced unemployment above 8 percent. It is disturbing to me that while our country has hundreds and hundreds of thousands of workers who are giving up their job searches, the Senate continues to sit on more than 23 bipartisan jobs bills passed by the House throughout the past year. This is why I introduced another bill (see below) designed to spur energy independence and job creation, by taking action to approve the Keystone XL pipeline, a project which has been delayed for over 3 years. The 20 thousand construction jobs – not to mention the thousands of other employment opportunities – created by this project would be a big step toward putting our country on a path to economic recovery.

North American Energy Access Act

Today, I introduced the North American Energy Access Act (H.R. 3548). This legislation

transfers permitting approval authority over the Keystone XL Pipeline to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). My bill creates a structured process by which FERC would approve the pipeline, including the route modification to be worked out with Nebraska. The American people want us to stop buying Venezuelan oil. The Keystone Pipeline is a key component to making that happen. Going forward with FERC is simply moving the authority to an agency that understands pipelines.

Under this legislation, the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline would remain in harmony with the National Environmental Policy Act, while still enabling construction to begin on the non-Nebraskan portion of the pipeline, while details and approval of the Nebraska route modification are worked out. This legislation means that Keystone will progress in a timely manner and that our country gets the much-needed jobs and energy security that it will bring. This legislation needs to become law, now!

Keystone XL Pipeline Hearing

On a related note, today I presided over the House Energy and Commerce's subcommittee on Energy and Power hearing on the Keystone XL Pipeline. Follow this link to view this hearing.

Get the Latest Updates

Visit my website, Facebook, Lee Listens or sign up for my Twitter feed to get the latest updates on what is going on in Washington and the district.