

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304

June 29, 2022

Colonel Kevin R. Golinghorst
St. Louis District Engineer & Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1222 Spruce St.
St. Louis, MO 63103

Dear Colonel Golinghorst:

I appreciate the Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) efforts to study and address the water infrastructure issues that have plagued the Cahokia Heights community for decades. Using the initial federal funding I secured in the *Infrastructure Jobs and Investment Act* and the *Fiscal Year 2022 Omnibus Appropriations Act*, I encourage the Corps to quickly work to address the community's water infrastructure problems. I urge the Corps to engage with local residents, as well as federal, state, and local agencies, to better understand the area's challenges.

Since my initial request for federal assistance last year, the Corps has begun interagency consultations and committed to using two existing authorities to begin addressing the systemic water infrastructure issues in Cahokia Heights. With the initial federal funding I secured, I am glad the Corps will carry out a sewer improvement project using the Corps' Section 219 environmental infrastructure authority in Madison and St. Clair Counties. I also support the Corps' second project, a study to analyze root causes and recommend solutions to the area's flooding, using the Corps' Section 206 flood plain management services authority. Community input on both the scope and execution of these projects will be essential to the success of the Corps' work.

Cahokia Heights is a made up of more than 70 percent Black residents, more than 30 percent of whom are low-income. The city has long borne the burden of systemic racism and institutional neglect, including water infrastructure that has gone decades without adequate maintenance or replacement. Residents today find their homes and surrounding areas flooded during heavy rains, with sewer systems overflowing into streets, yards, and homes. In addition to the health and safety implications of contaminated flood waters, sewer overflow places undue burdens on low-income residents facing damage to their homes and property and rising costs to repair their city's infrastructure. This community actively is advocating for solutions and is well-informed on the city's infrastructure problems. The residents should be consulted by the Corps as its projects are carried out.

While I continue to pursue additional federal resources and state and local funding commitments, I urge the Corps to engage with the community to identify and execute projects that will produce real measurable results for the residents of Cahokia Heights. I request that you work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and my office to meet with Cahokia Heights residents to discuss the upcoming projects and additional project opportunities the community may want to highlight for the Corps to consider.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to working with you and the community to address the infrastructure crisis faced by Cahokia Heights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dick Durbin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator