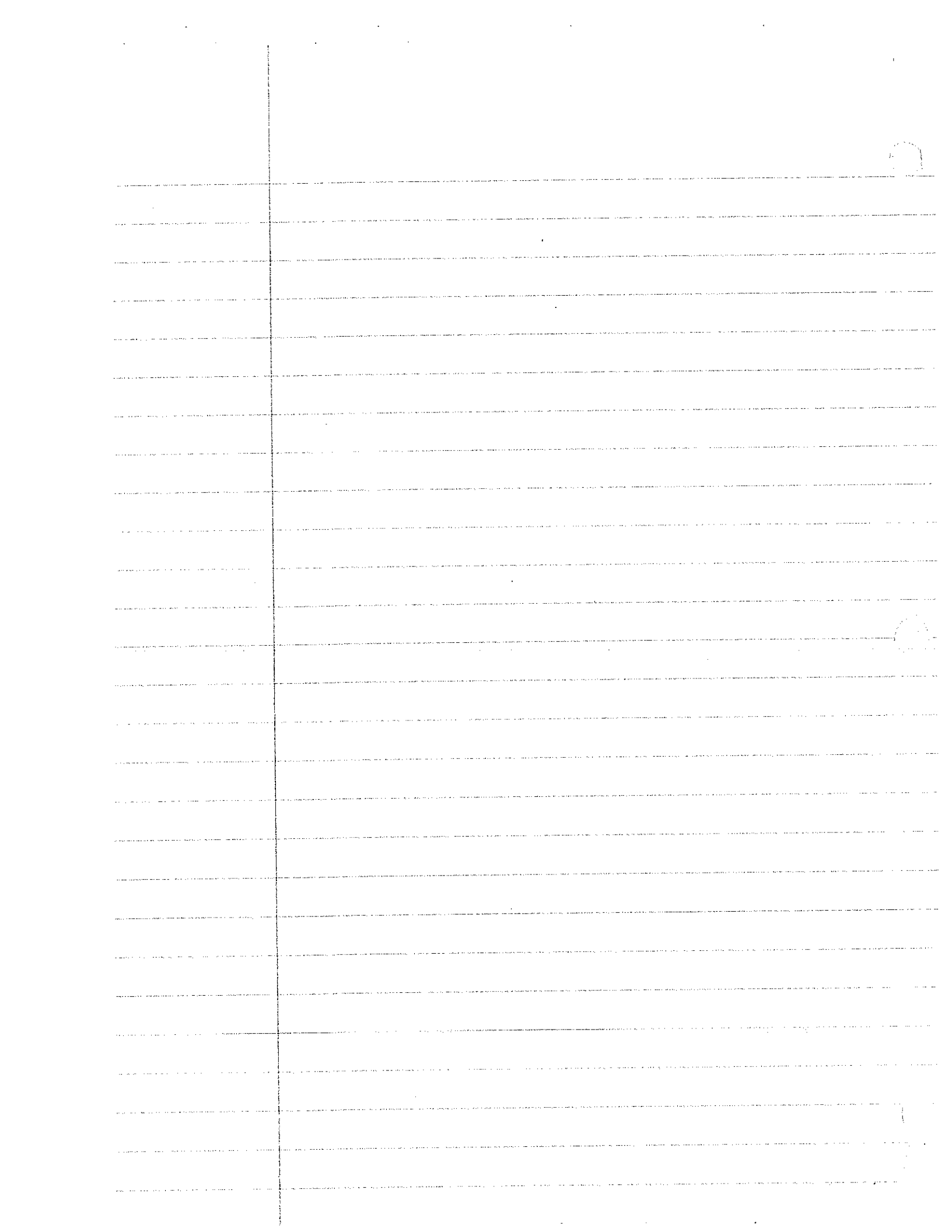
The wing dikes put in place have helped and hurt. They keep transportation of barges able to continue, but all of the rocks and sediment put in place by creating wing dikes raise the water level. We have researched and even graphs have been made to exemplify the rising river, but no one cares. Our rivers are plagued with these wing dikes. Nearly 700 in just 3 counties, Jackson, Union and Alexander, our river has the most wing dikes in all of the world, nothing to be proud of. As we know by science class is common knowledge once you place an object in water the water level rises because of displacement. All of this weight being put in the river has to do something, I imagine how many are spread throughout the Mississippi If 700 are stretched accross our small portion, it has to do something. The Mississippi affects a lot of the heartland, countless families will be affected, and they continue to stack all of this weight in to the river with no care for what they are doing. The rivers levees haven't been



kept up to date and if you haven't noticed, it shows. The locks are deteriating and the levees themselves are being eaten away every hour that passes. Water burrows its way underneath the levees and creates sand boils, these boils weaken the levee and bring water into the floodplain, sinkholes could be produced which impact the well being of the community. Farmland could be destroyed and have been in the past, this affects the financial balance of Southern Illinois, farming is all we have here, without it we have no money, we still don't have money in Southern Illinois to rebuild the levees this would wipe us out completely.

I personally think it is incompetent to leave our levees to rot. It is inconsiderate to ignore the requests of people who are in serious need of help. We ask that you repeal the federal law prohibiting D rated levees from recieving funding, we have no money to fix our levees. I know Illinois is broke, but we need help or we will suffer, all of Illinois may suffer.

Sincerely,

Joshua Moore

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant

My name is Deja Rohlfing, and I attend Shawnee Jr./Sr. High School in Wolf Lake, IL. I live in the outskirts of Jonesboro, IL. and I see the problems with the levees everyday when I drive to school. The levees in Southern Illinois are not going to fix themselves. We need your help and fast before it was too late.

I've learned that are nearly 700 wing dikes in Union, Jackson, and Alexander counties. The wing dikes do not help us when we are worrying about the flooding. They make flooding worse by increasing the height of the Mississippi River. I'm sure you have heard about the New Year Flood and its effect on our levees. We desperately need funds to repair the levees because if another flood, like the New Year Flood, happened the levees would not hold. Grand Tower and Wolf Lake, IL. would be gone; therefore, the Shawnee School District would also vanish.

You can drive just about anywhere in Southern Illinois and see how bad the levees need maintenance. Even if it was a small thing, like mowing the weeds, it would make a difference. We have small animals making their homes in the levees and that is a huge issue. The animals burrowing weakens the structure which increases the chances, which are already high, of the levees breaking.

I would love to see actions taking place very soon. I think a change in policy would be effective for us. We need help and you are the only one who can help us.

Sincerely,

Deja Rohlfing

Deja Rohlfing

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Austin Lyerla and I live in Jonesboro, Illinois but I live on the edge of Jonesboro and go to Shawnee Jr. Sr. High School. I am writing to you for the simple fact that our levees are in desperate need of attention. It makes no sense as to why our levees have been neglected for as long as they have. The lives by the southern part of the Mississippi river matter just as much as any other life. There are too many wing dikes that are in the Mississippi river, the neglectful acts of the state shows how much "the bottoms" mean to them, and the levees need to be taken care of by the state as much as we care for them. Action needs to be taken before the next flood washes us out, leaving thousands homeless with nowhere to go.

How many wing dikes do you believe are in the southern part of the Mississippi river? I can tell you there are way too many and we have the most wing dikes in our part of the Mississippi river than any other place in the world. There are over 700 wing dikes in " the bottom" region. I do not know about you, but to me; it is unbelieveable that wing dikes are still being place in the river for experimental purposes. Continue to put diks in the water and we can guarantee that the next disastrous flood will destroy our homeplace. People say that dikes have no relationship with the water being high; however, they are wrong. As an experiment, take a bowl and fill it up with water about halfway full. Now go and find some rocks and place them in the bowl with the water. At first, you will not notice anything but just keep adding rocks to the water. You will notice that the water starts to rise; didn't you? The point is everything has volume. Putting large amounts of rocks into a little section of a river is going to displace a large amount of water. If all those rocks were not in the river during the new year flood the water would have been lower and not almost topped the levees.

The Mississippi levees need to be taken care of just as much as any of the other levees. It is almost hard to believe that the state cares about this part of the state because we seem to have received no funding. If we have received any funding then there has not been enough because there has not been any improvements to the nearby levees. What we need is a machine that helps us with sandbagging. We cannot afford to lose our homes because there is no where we can go. A sandbagging machine would be great. Not only could we have a stockpile of sandbags prepped before a flood, but it would give us an advantage against mother nature. Having a sandbagging machine would jumpstart the process for defending ourselves against the next flood. If you think about it; we would not have to waste time bagging all those sandbags by hand which would and will take a very long time. That is time that we could use to be putting sandbags down on the spots of the levees that are very weak and need help staying held together. As I am typing this letter to you I can almost bet that you are thinking " Why don't you people just prepare sandbags

before hand when there is not a current flood?" If you are thinking that then the answer is "We all have jobs and cannot afford to miss work when there is not an emergency." We understand that the state is broke. Repairing the levees would be ideal, but we need help and a good start would be to help us with the sandbagging machine and a place to store the sandbags while we are waiting to protect ourselves.

Lastly, everyone down here in this little and broke part of the state care a lot about what is keeping us safe. One of the reasons we are safe right now is because of the levees. The latest flood we had just gone through, last year, was really scary for everyone that lives down in this direction. The levees actually broke in the 2015 - 2016 new year flood and people's houses were destroyed from it. Most of my school district is protected by the levees. If it was not for those levees; Shawnee Jr. Sr. High School would not exist today. I do not know if you know about this but there are a few people that actually live right beside the levee. I cannot imagine what would happen if the levee broke with them in their house because they have no place to go. When I would go over to her house when I was little. We would literally play on the levee because we thought that it was just the best place to be and play on top of. This is how close she live to the levee. Please, help us fight against the water and protect our home place and our memories.

In conclusion, there are too many dikes that are in the southern part of the Mississippi river and they are contributing to the water level when there is a flood. Like I said, everything in this world has volume. I am sure you did not try my experiment but that is okay; I spoiled it for you anyway. But if you don't believe me about what will happen when you put extra items in the water; go ahead and try the experiment. You will see I am right. We cannot fight the water alone when the water level is high so we are asking not for you to physically come down here and help us; however, a token (sandbagging machine) to help fight against it. It would be a shame if we had casualties in our next flood. If it was you asking us; we would want to help you because we would try and put ourselves into your situation. Home is where we come to relax and settle down. I would very much be upset if I was on my way home from work and my house and all its memories vanished. We cannot do this alone and we need your help. Help us keep the water out and do not let the water come in and wash us out.

Sincerely,



Austin Lyerla

February 15, 2017

Dear senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, my name is Joshua Ryan McDaniel, and I live in McClure, Illinois. I am 16 years old and live at home with my mom, my dad, and my sister. I go to Shawnee Jr. Sr. Highschool in Wolf Lake, Illinois and here, we are extremely concerned with the condition of our levees. We often discuss the well being of the levees in our History class, and I must confess that prior to learning so much about the levees, I thought nothing about them. Now I feel that I have to wake up because we all could be in trouble.

Had I, along with my classmates, not been taught about the condition that the levees are in, I would not be writing a letter asking for your help. The levees are decomposing from all the years of rain and built up pressure. If the levees give, then there will be people, alot of people, with no more homes or jobs. I want to continue to grow up here too.

Please help, give us a chance to save our levees. Come to Shawnee, or better yet, come see our levees. Come get a glimpse of what we are all in constant fear of. Help fund our levees, so we don't have to be afraid any more, help us to preserve our home for years to come.

Sincerely,

Josh McDaniel

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Boost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant my name is Dalton Mayberry I am from Jonesboro, IL and go to Shawnee District 64. I have lived here my whole life I know our levees are not in the best shape. Also recently in class we have been learning more about them and what shape they are in. Most of our levees in this district is 11 rated. This makes it even harder because we can't get the federal fund we need for our levees. If possible you should reform this law because it would help a lot.

Just the slightest of funds will help our levee district significantly. If we keep putting off the problems it will only end horribally. If for some reason our levees would break in our district our school would be destroyed because it's so close to the river. In some places our levees our pretty bad and its scary in some places when it floods because it keeps people constantly wondering if the levee will hold.

So if we could just get the slightest of funds it would be greatly appreciated and would be put to good use. We have had many ideas of what we could do with these funds. One of these ideas is since we live in we could take a small fund to get a building for storing sandbags

This would help us be a little bit more prepared when flooding occurs. So if you would please put us into consideration even though I know you are busy it would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in this feel free to please contact me back with any comments or questions.

Sincerly

Dalton
Mayhem

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, and Representative Bryant,

My name is Kannon Wills, I'm a resident of McClure, and I'm a Junior at Shawnee Jr. Sr. Highschool. You all have probably already read a few papers like this. So I'm just going to cut to the chase. The levees here are almost worthless and because of a law, they aren't getting any better. Not only does that need to be changed, we need to be realistic about this. A lot of people live within this area that is surrounds by these terrible levees. If one busts, not only will people lose their homes, local kids will have to change schools, lots of farmland will be lost, and some will even lose their jobs. But its not the matter of if, its when.

This area is full of farmers. Most of them have been here for decades. Not only would they have to be uprooted from their main homeland, they would lose everything they own in the fields. The State would even lose out on the little bit of profit these farmers bring in each harvest.

Just think about the kids that live within this poor levee district. There goes some education that's out the window if the levee collapses in the middle of the school year. That's a lot of lost school funding as well. This area really needs new levees. Not only that, but this area is all some people have. Save us by saving our levees. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kannon Wills

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Payton Trammel and I am from Grand Tower, Illinois. I am currently a Junior at Shawnee Jr-Sr. Highschool. The reason for writing this is to inform you about our levees. Growing up, living in the bottoms was said to be very risky. This is because where I live, we are surrounded by large bodies of water. Flooding is usually the worry we all get when the river rises. Since our levees were built long ago, they are reaching their weakest point today.

Last year, our town suffered through a flood. The whole town was under voluntary evacuation. Many people were worried because they did not want to lose their home or possessions. Since we live in a flood plain, we can not get flood insurance. If it flooded, all of the people in the town

would lose everything they own. Not only would the town of Grand Tower be at a lost but our School would not be able to operate. With the area being flooded, our school would be under water and it would wipe out our entire district.

By writing this letter, I hope that something could be done about this. I would like to invite you to come to Shawnee Jr.-Sr. Highschool to learn more about this. We can show you our levees and the mudslides that are on them. If there is anything you could do, it would be greatly appreciated. Our community means so much to us. We don't want to lose it due to a flood.

Sincerely,

Payton Trammel

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Pheps, Representative Bryant,

I am writing you with a Severe problem, Southern IL levees have reached tragic conditions and belive me when I say thier not going to Stand much more of this water, Now you may be thinking, "oh well they can Stand at for a little bit longer, it can't flood that often down there, but let me tell you Something Since the flood of 1993 the water levels have lose a Signifigant amount, enough to Cause floods in 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2016. That may not Sound like a big deal to you, but thats five Chances to destroy our lively hood in 8 years.

I'm Currently hopeing that you will understand the ergency of all these letter we've wrote to you, and

that you can take enough time out of your day to consider us as human beings. If you knew all of our stories and just how often the water tries to end them, you wouldn't be so quick to dismiss us.

Sincerly,

Casey Kwiatkowski

Feb 15, 2017

My name is Casey Baitzel and I go to Shawnee high School i live in Grand tower Ill. The flooding is very Bad in our Town. A flood happends just about every Year. I experience the new years flood first hand we had to sand Bag the levee where they have been working on it and still are.

There are about 20 sides along our levee and they are Pretty Bad. If we dont get the levee fixed we could risk Losing our homes. These levees are over 50 years old and Acutly need to Be worked on.

I ask that You Do everything ya can to help our levees out and us so we could Lose our homes and everything we own.

Casey Baitzel

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Levi Boren and I live in Wolf Lake, Illinois. Wolf Lake is apart of what people like to call the "Bottoms." In the Bottoms we are not strangers to the Mississippi River and the problems with the levees. We realize that the levees need help and that is where you come in.

Our community needs funds for everything. The upkeep on the levees is certainly not excluded from that. On top of that, the levees need reparred badly. Our levees are the only thing protecting us from disaster during the flood season During the New Years flood, I was on the levees throwing sandbags for the sandboils. and, to be honest, it was scary. Watching the water eat away at the levee is something you should never have to do.

To make it simple, our levees have some pretty big wounds. We as a community have done all we can do to fix it. The treatment for those wounds lay in your hands and I personally ask that you

do everything in your power to help. If you have questions or just want to learn more I invite you to come to our high school, Shawnee Jr/Sr High, in Wolf Lake, IL to get some answers for you.

Sincerely,

Teri Boren

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Taylor Verble. Allow me to tell you a little bit about myself! I was born in Southeast Missouri Hospital on July 12, 2000. I lived in Wolf Lake, Illinois up until the age of five, moved to the state of Virginia, and then moved back to Wolf Lake in seventh grade. I am now sixteen years old and I am a junior at Shawnee High School, located in Wolf Lake, Illinois. Currently, I reside in Grand Tower. My house sits very close to a levee, in fact, it is so close that I can see it out of my kitchen window! So, you can say that the levee systems play an important role in my everyday life.

I will jump straight to the point because I'm sure you have many important things to do. Our levees are failing. They were originally designed to last for only up to 50 to 60 years, but because of our lack of funds, we have been unable to make the repairs that are required to improve our levee systems. We are way past the 60 year mark! Flooding and levee failure is something that the people in "the bottoms" are in constant fear of! My house sits very close to the levee, if the water were to overtop, or the levees were to blow, I would have less than five minutes to leave my home and relocate. The people who live on Front Street in Grand Tower, are not even that lucky. We need fundage! Any amount that you could provide us with would be greatly appreciated. Our homes and even more importantly, our lives, are greatly dependant on the levee systems. Another concern of mine is certainly the wing dikes that are being added to the river in an "attempt" to help with flooding. However, all research points to the dikes being detrimental to our levees. The levees must be worked on and improved! It is only a matter of time before those of us in the floodplain lose our homes to the mighty Mississippi.

I will end this letter by asking that you please visit our small towns and even Shawnee High School in order to learn more about our levees. If you were able to get a good look at the poor conditions that they are in and also see the constant fear that we live in, you could have a change of heart. We need any sort of funding that we can get in order to make a positive change for those in the floodplain. Please do anything that you possibly can in order to send more funds our way so we can continue prosperity in the bottoms.

Sincerely,

Taylor Verble

Febuary 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Representative Phelps, Representative Bosant, and Senator Schimpf

My name is trace faire and I am a junior at Shawnee Jr. Sr. Highschool. I am Contacting you to adress problems about our levees that surround our school district. I have learned about half of what I know about the levees from My history class, which is taught by an awsome teacher named Mrs. Jamie Nash-Berry. The other half of my knolege is from living in the bottems all my life.

If funds are available some of of them could be used to hire some one to mow and take care of the levees so there will not be as many animal holes. They need to be taken care of because our levees are falling apart. If you have a good chunk of money it could be put towards relief wells or new locks + dams.

If you could come and see what kind of shape our levees are in and come and talk to the students and residents in the Shawnee district. Also if possible reform the law that prohibits use of federal money on a U-rated levee. It would be an honor if you could come to our school and discuss this problem with us.

Sincerely

Trace Fabre

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant.

I'm a Junior at Shawnee High School. My name is Braeden Treece. I live in Wolf Lake Illinois. I am writing to you because of our levee's. I'm also writing this to see what you can do to help us with our levee's.

The levee's will affect me and the bottoms because if the levee fails it will wash away our homes. I know this because I've done research on it, I've sand bagged, and I've also watched and talked to levee commissioners. We could use your help for any thing like replacing pipes, gas to keep the levees mowed, and to fix locks. Our levee's are not the best and their not going to last another 100 years. They are more than 50 years old and never have been fixed very good. Any help

I wish you could come to our school to learn more about the levee's. I want you to see if you can get money for our levee's. I hope you can find more funding for our levee's. If you come to our school you would understand why we want the levees fix because our school is less then a mile from the levee.

Sincerely,

Braeden Treece

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Shannon Crane, I am a student at Shawnee High school. In recent years we have had record floods here in the bottoms, Our levees are over 50 years old they have alot of wear and tear, and they need a lot of work. In our history class, we have been studying about the levees and the effect the river has on our community.

During last years flood we had 20 slides in a two mile stretch on the levee. A slide is when the middle section of the levee slides down, creating a hole. Honestly, our levees Suck, Im not going to lie about that. But they are all we have to keep our communitys here. Our Community itself can't raise enough money to fix

last resort, Please help in anyway you can, we don't want to leave our homes.

We could use a fund or anything money related, we need all the help we can get. We aren't a rich community, we can't do this alone. So I ask from the bottom of my heart, please help in any way possible, so we can keep our homes and the land we love

Sincerely,

Shannon Crane

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, and Representative Bryant, my name is Conner Robertson. I am 18 years old, 11th grader in Shawnee Jr. Sr. High School. I am writing this letter because my home and many others are in danger. I live in Grand Tower, Illinois and our levees are servely damaged and could give out on the next flood. I know about this because I lived in Grand Tower all my life and been studing it in school. So, I think I am qulified in writing this.

The levees are important to our area. If the levees fails on the next flood then it will affect me and the many other People. Funding would be nice to have if it went toward repairing or rebuilding a lot of parts of the levees. The levees around Grand Tower are very worn out and could give out. The funds could save and Prevent People from losing their homes.

Nevertheless, I invite you to come down to Shawnee and learn more about the levees. I hope you consider changing laws about U- rated leevees being Prohibit for getting federal funds. The law doesn't make sense and is kinda forcing us to wait for the next flood to come and wipe out our homes.

Sincerely,

Conner Robertson

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Allison Walters and I am a student at Shawnee high School in Wolf Lake, Illinois. I'm writing you today to talk about repairing the levees in our area. Since the beginning of the school year, we have learned about the levees around our school district. Currently the levees aren't considered to be in the greatest condition. If they were to break, there would be no school for the students who attend Shawnee. Although, I'm sure everybody would be thrilled to not have

School, we still need it. That's why I have decided to write you. So we can get help to repair our levees.

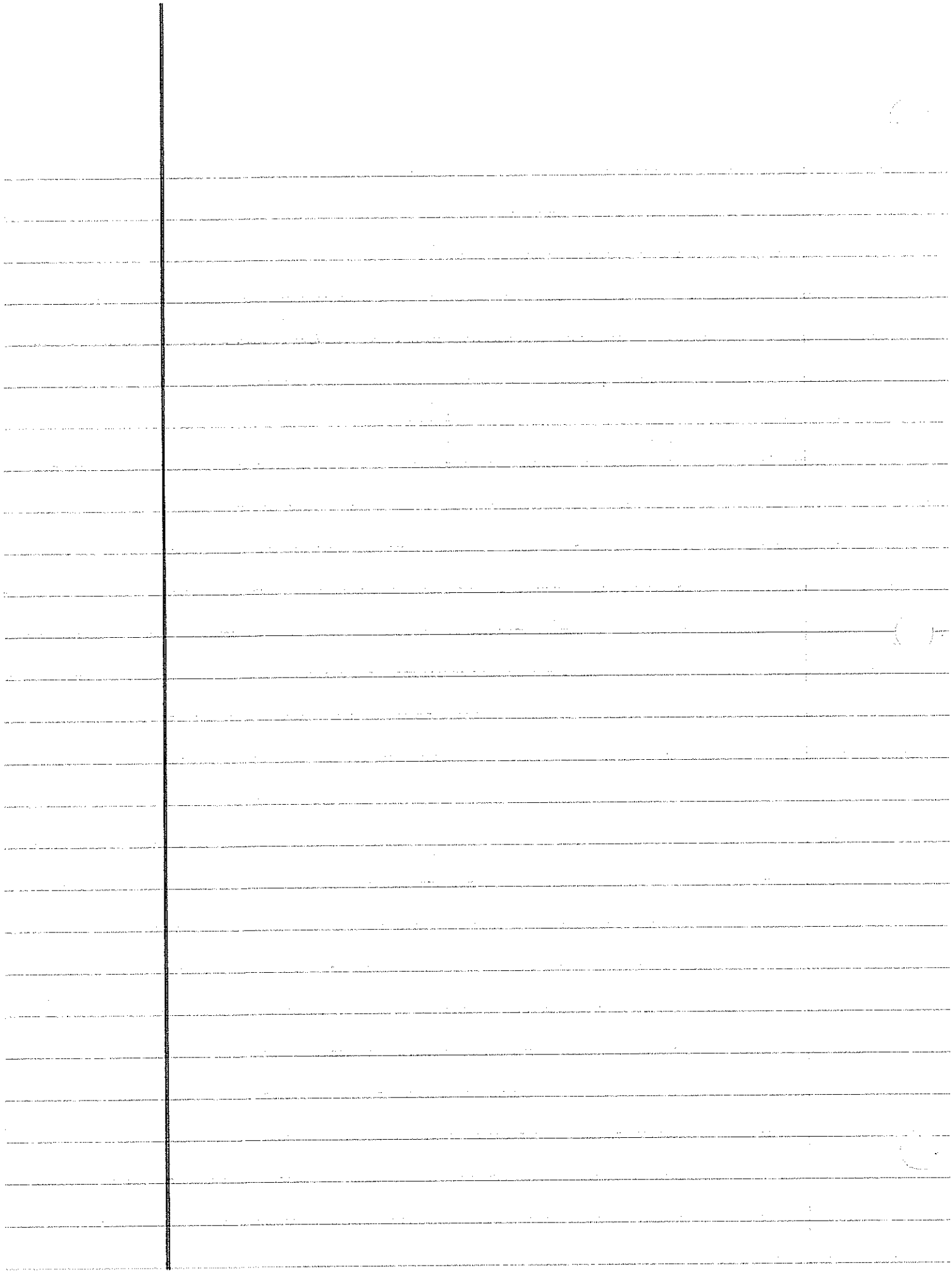
The levees around here are able to break at any point in time. If we could get any kind of help at all, it would be gladly appreciated. Even if it's the smallest way possible. Filling sand bags for us so we can prepare for floods would be a big help. Stopping the construction of wing dikes would prevent the water from going up and causing wear and tear on the levee. If the levee were to break all of our crops would go to ruin and we'd have no Product. No products mean no money, and no money means no way to buy necessities. Our levees need help being fixed.

Majesty.

If you'd like to come by our School and talk to us about the levees, you're more than welcome. We would really love it if you could help us in any way possible to fix the levees. Thank you for taking your time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

Allison Walters



February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Represenetive Phelps, Represenetive Bryant.

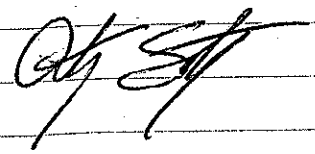
I am Austin Smith from McClure, Illinois. The reason I am writing is because the topic of the levees came up in class and it had me worried. I live right next to a levee and people are saying our levees are week and old. I know they are telling the truth because of the New Year's Flood and all of the fear it put everyone in. People were saying the levees were going to break.

I think if we had enough money we could fix our levees. I know it would be very costly, but people have talked about just prepare for our floods and prevent from our levees getting worse. Some people have came up with a sandbagging machine and keeping the levees grass cut so animals don't burrow in it.

We as a school and community would like for you to take action and help us with our levee problem. If we don't do something all of us down in the bottoms are going to

lose our homes and towns. The place where we have grown up, me, my family, and my friends. So please take action and help us save our levees.

Sincerely,



Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Pheles, Representative Bryant,

I am Cory Johnson from McClure Illinois. I am very concernd for our levees. Our US. History class has studied our levees and how floods affect them as well. 95% of people in our district live in the lowlands and our lives would be ruined if a levee were to breach. Our levees protect us from the raging force of the mighty Mississippi. Although I am a Junior here At Shawnee Highschool and almost done with school this is my home town and would be devistated if our homes and school were destroyed.

Just to be honest. the levees here in southern Ill are not great we have had a few breach and if the right one breaches we will have nothing left, the next big flood we have could and just may wipe us out.

We are not asking for near as much as the big citys ask for. we dont need quite that much but a charitable donation or any money at all could help so much purchasing property to sand bags for future Roads new locks and Dams could help and maybe even knock out those wing dikes.

You could look in to the bill of not fedrally supporting unstable levees. How are we Sapposed to make them stable if we dont have the money to fix them, Please help us fix our levees even if it is to late.

Sincerely

Corynn Johnson

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant.

My name is Dawson Johnson, and I am writing to you from Shawnee Jr.-Sr. High School. The reason I am writing to you today is because our levees are failing. I live on Ware-Wolf Lake Road in Wolf Lake, Illinois and my house is very close to the levee. I know the levees are very close to collapsing because we have done research in civics and in our history class. I would really appreciate it, along with my fellow classmates, if you gave us funds to save our lives and our school. It's not just about saving the schools, it's also about saving hundreds of lives. The people down in the Southern Illinoisan area are like one big family. The people down here are like family to us and we don't want to see something that can be fixed take their lives. Sure, we might live in a town that really nobody knows about, but that doesn't mean you can't take a little time to come down here and listen to what the kids have to say. These people's lives are on the line during every harsh storm because when the river stages rise, that is putting pressure on our weak levees. We worry that those levees will break and we will lose our homes and it's very hard to find new homes in today's economy rates.

Our levees are failing tremendously. We need more funds to make our levees safe and trustworthy for when another flood like the New Year's flood occurs. If another New Year's flood occurs our levees will collapse and flood our school district. If the levee breaks in Grand Tower that is a third of our school's population. If the levee breaks in Wolf Lake, that is the other two thirds of our school. If the levees broke in McClure that is a small portion of our school but it's peoples lives we are worried about. I don't think the United States would want to be recognized as the country that just sat back and watched the levees break and take hundreds of lives knowing that they could have done something to prevent the levees from breaking by sending in funds to fix them.

The levees need to be fixed. They are probably the worst levees in the Southern Illinois area. My house is literally 100 yards away from the levee and if that levee were to break I would not have time to pack up my valuables and leave. I wouldn't have time to even get in my truck and get out of the rushing waters way. So, I might lose my life because the government won't allow us to receive Federal Funds to fix our levees because we have U rated levees. I would appreciate it if you took this law away. I would also appreciate it if you came to our school to learn more about this issue that we are facing.

Sincerely,

Dawson Johnson

Febuary 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Phelps, and Representative Bryant, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf

My name is William Wyatt Harris and I am a junior at Shawnee Highschool in Wolf lake IL. I live in Grand Tower IL. I am also 17 years old. My parents P:O box is 333. I have lived in the bottoms since I was born.

When the river comes up high enough on the levees, people end up volenteering to help sand bag the levees that are almost gone. There is usually a lot of kids that help and other people that don't even come down here.

I am one of these that has and will sand bag for my hometown. The New Year flood was the worst one out of them all, it even broke a worlds record. I am proud to say that I had helped durring that. Also Shawnee doing everything they can to help that's really cool and not

many people would do that like our School does.

Sincerly, William Wyatt Harris

Febuary 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant, Representative Bost, Senator fowler, Senator Schimpf.

My name is Trenton Matlock Im a Junior at Shawnee High School. I feel its important to Save our levees because if we don't our schools McClure, Wolf Lake, and Grand tower will all be flooded out if it breaks. Me and My friends have lived here in the bottoms all of our lives. We have been in a few floods and it made us have to boat in and out. We know what the river is Capable of since we lived here all of our lives.

We need Strong levees because we live right next to the Mississippi river. If we don't have strong levees and they break all the little towns will be destroyed. Many lives will be lost. Im a Strong hunter so I have hunting ground around the levees and when I see a big pot hole I go get some gravel to fill them with. I Care for the levees because we need them.

I know what Will happen if our levees break. Ive seen what it does to houses, towns, and farmland. Im an outdoors kid and Im always in the nature Checking Stuff out. I just want strong levees. Most people don't know how bad it could get without our levees.

Sincerly Trenton Matlock

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Represenative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

I am a junior from Shawnee Highschool located in Wolf Lake, Illinois. My name is Thomas James Kell, but everyone likes to call me T.J. forshort. I am from Grand Tower. A smalltown surrounded by beautiful water fronts and Levee's.

The big reason of you getting contacted is that we want help with our very poor levee's. The Levee's around us are in very poor condition and we do not have the money to fix them. Not only do we not have the money, but we are not able to get them fixed because theyare so bad. Why can't something that you know is broken beyond repair get fixed. If the levee's were to fail by the muddy river, or Grand Tower (Mississippi) we would loose everything we have worked so hard to have.

How would you feel if everything you owned just vanished, because of something so simple as this? How hard is it to come look and realize we need help? This is why I am asking pleare, please help us get the funds to fix our Levees. It would also be very appreciated if you could reform the federal law that prohibits U rated Levee's from getting federal funds. Why would you do that if you know our Levee's are U rated?

Sincerley,

T.J. Kell

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representitive Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representitive Phelps, Representitive Bryant,

My name is Brittney Abercrombie and I'm from Alexander County, IL. We've been studying about the levees a lot in class. We've learned about the effects of the wing dikes and how different funds for the levees are either not approved and what they sometimes go to. The levees have a huge impact on the lives of the people who live in the bottoms.

Funds that go to the levees could go to things such as a sandbagging machine, improving drainage pipes, rebuild weak points in the levees and relief wells to fight sand boils. Wing dikes continue to be put into the rivers and cause the water level to raise more and more.

I'd like for more things to be done with helping the levees. Such as not putting more wing dikes in after knowing it don't help. I'd also like for our area to be able to receive more funds to improve our levees. Every little bit helps.

Sincerely, Brittney Abercrombie

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant

This is an urgent issue that you must listen to. This message is The failing Out of the levee. The reason why it Matters To me because I have been living in The bottoms. I am a student of Shawnee Jr-Sr High School. I am a senior and my name is Zachary Clardy. I live in Jonesboro on Valley Mission Lane. I have lived here My whole life and I am always being flooded Out of my Things to go somewhere else where the waters is not high. I have great knowledge On The topic of The levees and I have been learning more since Freshman year. Please don't Think we are kids Wanting attention, This is suppose to be our home.

There are many ways that not fixing Our deteriating levees affects My life. I had to see my roads over flood and not even be able to go into town. If you wanted to go into town you would have to get on a boat and have

Another problem was the flood that occured in 2013 caused a pipe to bust on the levee and was never repaired. Another big situation was when the sand boils showing up in the levees and will eventually cause destruction to our crops and our homes. We need your help.

I want you gentleman and ladies to be the ones to stand up for us. I want you to help us get our levees repaired and help us keep our homes. We need some one to represent our voice so please help us.

Sincerely,

Zach Cowdy

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

I'm Madilyn Ellet and I live in Grand Tower. I'm a Senior at Shawnee High School. I have lived in Grand Tower my whole life. I have studied our levee issues since my freshman year. Before high school I sand-bagged in Grand Tower, so I have known about the problems for many years. My freshman year was when Mrs. Nash, my psychology teacher, taught a whole lesson about the levees.

Last year the bottoms were hit by a record high flood and my whole school district was in danager. Back in 2013 Grand Tower had a pipe collapse on the levee holding the Big Muddy. During the New Year Flood the new pipe still hadn't been in place and there was a hole in the levee. I was with my dad, sand-bagging the levee and when we come up on the hole, from the construction of the new pipe, and there was still a guy in a tractor and dig out the pipe. We were in shock because for the past few days we had been driving the levees and looking for levee slides, and, while we were working hard to keep the levee together this guy on a tractor was taking it a part. It has now been over a year and the pipe is still not in place.

I'm writting this letter today because we are desprate for help., Money would help, but really we just need attention on the issues. If you would like to learn more please come to our school. If you can help in anyway please do.

Sincerely,

Madilyn Ellet

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Kindra Baltzell, I am a Senior at Shawnee Jr. Sr. High School and I am from Grand Tower, Illinois. In my town we are at a high risk for flooding. I have grown up with the fear of floods. I have learned everything I know about our levee system, the river, wing dikes, sand boils, and floods from my Social Science teacher starting in Freshman year. Living in the bottoms my whole life has also brought me a lot of knowledge about those topics.

Every spring when the water comes up all of the towns in the bottoms worry that our homes will be ripped from us. We work together as a team to try and prevent our levees from failing and keeping the water out of our towns. But sometimes it is hard to do that alone and we need help from outside people and funds. We need funds for small things and big things. We could use them for things like a sandbagging machine as well as helping us get the pipe back in place that busted in 2013 and still is not fixed. We also could use funds to rebuild parts of the levee that are weak. All of those weak spots we are having to sandbag everytime the water gets up too high. Wing dikes that are continuing to be put in our river are just hurting us significantly. It is important to get the construction of them stopped and we need help in order to get that accomplished. We have looked at many sources to know wing dikes

are bad and we need all the help we can get for everything.

We need some action taken soon before my town and home along with others are taken away from us. If you would like to come visit us to learn more about what we know we would be very appreciative and excited to have you here. Like I said, we need all the help we can get. If we can get you on our sides that is one step closer to saving our towns.

Sincerely,

Kindra Battjes

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Nick Baltzell, I am a Senior at Shawnee High School and have first hand experience when it comes to our levee problem. I live in Grand Tower, Illinois, and we are Constantly battling the Mississiepi River. Over the years I've helped repair our levees as best as we could. I have also been studying our levee situation for four years now. Through studying and experience, I'd say I'm pretty informed.

The surronding towns and levee districts have done all

they can do. The People of the Mississippi flood Plain are fighting a losing battle. We have tried to handle the problem on our own, but we have reached the point where we need your help. Even small things can help, such as funds to buy a sandbagging machine, gas for mowers and generators, and new drainage pipes. These things will make a huge difference in our struggle.

I know that you have the power to make things happen. Please do everything you can to make a change in policy or get us more funds. You are more than welcome to visit our school in order to learn more about the situation.

Sincerely,

Nick Barnett

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Phelphs, Representative Bryant,

My names is Abbey Livesay and I am a Senior At Shawnee HighSchool. I have not only been involved with the levees since Freshman Year, but my whole life. I live along the Big Muddy River right where the Mississippi Meets the Big Muddy in Wolf Lake. I MUST Drive on the levee two miles one way to get in and out of my house. During the New Year Flood I could stand on the roof of my house and see the water. It was the same height as my house. The water was 2 Feet from the top of the levee.

The levee districts Preston, Grandtower, Clear Creek, McClure, and East cape all have levees that have a unsatisfactory rating which means the worst. We cant get any Funding at that rating. We need funding to fix our infastructures such as drainage pipes and locks. We also need funding for a sandbagging machine that will help when the water raises and we need sandbags to put down. There are locks needing to be replaced, new relief wells need to be put in, and even sections of our levees need to be replaced.

Overall we would like a change in the General policy, and a bill to be passed to have the Corp quit putting wing dikes in.

We would love for you to come and visit us and let us inform you more about our problems

Sincerely,

Abby Livesay

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Shimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

I am Drew McLane and I am writing to inform you about how we need help with the levees in Southern Illinois. My family farms a few farms that are right next to the levees. They have a U-rating, meaning that they are unsatisfactory. Since our levees have a U-rating, we can not get any Federal funding. Also, since we live in a poor area, the levees do not get much tax money either. My dad is on the Preston levee district board and he says that levees need funds for every thing.

Funds could be used from big costs to small costs. This could be used for relief wells which takes pressure off of the levees and helps sandboils. Other big costs would be new drainage pipes and locks which are very old. If really bad parts of the levees were rebuit, that would be amazing. Also, it could be used for gas for mowing the banks, a sandbagging machine and a shed to store the machine.

What I would like you to do is vote for a change in policy for anything that will help us with our levee issue. One

policy change could be a reform to the federal law that prohibits U-rated levees from receiving funds even though they need them most. My teacher, a few of my classmates, and I have given presentations about the levees to plenty of people. We would love to give one to you to educate you more about our levees.

Sincerely,

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Abigail Ellet from Grand Tower, Illinois. My grandpa, Mike Ellet Sr., is the Mayor of Grand Tower and my family is overall very active in the community. I am a junior at Shawnee High School in Wolf Lake, and if you have any comments or questions, you can contact me further by writing to me at 301 Market St. Grand Tower, IL.

I'm going to get right to the point. The levees are not in the best condition and I believe they need more work. Considering the fact that locals, including myself, have had to make huge "band-aids," or patches, for the levees by sandbagging, don't you think this should be more important than a bicycle path in Murphysboro? Our lives and homes are on the line. During our most recent flood on New Years, I had to evacuate. I couldn't return to my house for anything more than what we could fit in the vehicle.

In conclusion, our levees need renewed. They need patched and built onto. My house is right down the road from our local bank which is right in front of the levee. This is something many of us feel very strongly about. Any help you could provide us with would

definitely be much appreciated. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Abigail Ellet

Abigail Ellet

Feb. 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

My name is Molly Lewis from Wolf Lake, IL. I am a Senior at Shawnee High School, where Jamie Nash-Mayberry teaches us about the levees in our area. I, personally, have been studying our levees for 3 years. I also live so close to the levees that I can see them from my kitchen window. I am writing to you because our communities need help. We need funds. We need new equiptment. We need someone to help us find these things to save our community.

We need the funds for multiple things. We could put it towards a sand-bagging machine, fixing the drainage pipes, and even rebuild parts of the levees that are failing. We could also use the funds to help fight against sand boils. The levees that our school is close to were only meant to last for 50 years and they are about 67 years old this year. If they were to not get fixed, my house, my friend's houses, and my school would be washed away.

What I am asking from you is to, first of all, help us raise awareness for our community and our levees. After we raise some more awareness, we need funds and equiptment. But as of now, all we need are funds and awareness. Hope you can help us!

Sincerly,

Molly Lewis

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant, I am Dayton Mezo from Wolf Lake and I am writing to inform you about our levee problem. We have been studying these problems in class and I would like to ask for your help in maintaining the levees. The reason why I am asking is because this is my home and it is also home to all my friends and family and we need your help to restore the levees and save our homes. It is hard to enjoy Spring because of the constant risk of flooding in that season. It has started to become a problem that lasts longer than Spring now. For example the New Years flood.

There is one spot that I know could really use some help and it is near the Big Muddy River. That is just one of the many weak spots in the levees that need to be rebuilt. We could use some more funds for gas to keep the levees mowed which would cut down on the animals burrowing inside them. Also to build a sandbag storage so that the sandbagging process is quicker. The bigger costs like relief wells would help against sand boils, improve the drainage pipes and locks to allow water to get back to the river while keeping the river water on one si

Please visit shawnee High School and learn more from us about the problems with the levees. Please find a way to get more fund for this restoration process. We could really use your help and we need more funds. Please help us.

Sincerely,

Dalton Mezo

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, and Representative Bryant,

My name is Kaci Schmitt and I live in East Cape, IL, close by the levee. Its right by the Mississippi river. I know a lot about the levees because our History teacher teaches us all about it when it comes close to flood season. There is just to many problems with the levees, like the wing dikes are being worked on, the drainage pipes are old and rusting, and the sand boils. With that being said, there is just not enough time for people to fix the problems. Also, they say they need money to fix everything.

This topic effects everyone in the district, some more than others.

Nobody knows what it is like to have to pack up everything and leave your hometown until, they actually go through it. All anyone has to do is start fundraising to get money so no one would lose anything. The levees should have been rebuilt a long time ago. They are too old to try to fight the water. Things like small funds would do big things for the levees. Some other things that would help are relief wells to fight sand boils, fuel for a mower to keep banks mowed, rebuild the drainage and even replace the weak spots in the levee.

I'm requesting that we all need to fix the levees before it's too late. We need to find new laws. Come to our school to learn more of what we all know. I ask that you do all you can do to help find more funds. There needs to be a change in the law that states the federal law that Prohibits U rated levees

from receiving federal funds.

Sincerly,

Naci Schmitt

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative,

I am Ty Davis from Shawnee Highschool and this is my second year at Shawnee and also a Senior. I am writing all of you to continue the awareness of the levees. My teacher Jamie Washberry has been trying to continue the push to gain funds for the levees. Much study has gone into the levees and fixing the big problem. The levees that are here in Wolf Lake are 67 years old. A new levee needs to be put in place, with so much rain we have been gaining a flood can happen anytime.

Like others, I didn't know how important the levees were to people who live here in wolf lake and Surrounding areas. But, like anyone no one needs to be forced to move from their houses because of something that could have been prevented. The New Years flood was the first time I experienced a something that could have forced us to move just like my friends & teachers. So I really encourage you guys to help because you are all the only ones who can help and put this through. Imagine if it were you and your family. What would you want.

If there is anything we would want if not a new levee at least write us back.

Sincerely,

Tyrik Davis

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

I am Wyatt Hassebrock from Shawnee Jr./Sr. High school. I live in Grand Tower. We have been studying why our levees are so bad for quite some time now. I have been a member of the bottoms for 17 years, (my whole life). Our levees were only designed to last 50 years and they are now well over 60+ years. We do not have the funding we need to fix our levees because our poverty rate is so high. This is why we need YOUR help.

Every little bit of funds we recieve help our little towns and school stay safe from flood waters. Anything helps, from running cost like sandbagging machines, to mowing the banks to keep burrowing to a minimal. If we have another flood like the New years flood, our towns and school will not survive.

We encourage you to come and let us tell you more about the situation we are in. We need help and it's like we keep asking for it, but no action ever gets taken. We have done what we can do. Now it is up to you to help save our towns and school. Without our school how do our furture generation get educated? They don't. We ask you do all you can to find the funds we need to stay aflaut.

Sincerely,

Wyatt Hasselbrook

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

I am writing this letter to let you know that we still need help with the levees. My purpose for this, is to help my community and the families in this community to recieve funds for repairs. My entire life has been spent here in the bottoms, this is where my home is and it needs protected.

For everyone living in this community, a repaired levee would mean so much for us. We would get to live here for another 60 or 67 years to be exact. Funds for simple things like gas for keeping the banks mowed and a sandbagging machine would help us. Bigger funds such as rebuilt levees and relief wells would help us greatly. We currently have one levee that is still down from the last flood. Many of us here at shawnee have been studying the levees for most or even all of our high school career. One of our biggest concerns of what we have learned, is the wing dikes in our

stretch of the river. These wing dikes keep being added and added. They contribute significantly to the level of flood waters. We have many sources to bank this up and it needs fixed.

What I am requesting from you is that you do what you can to find funds to help us out, maybe visit our school, talk to local citizens of our community to get the idea of what it is that we go through almost annually. Anything you can do will help us fight the flood waters and we would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Brandon McClanahan

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

I'm Julian Harris, I'm a Senior from Shawnee High School. I'm writing to all of you about the levees. I live in Wolf Lake, IL. Since I have been raised in a flood plain I know a lot about the levees and flooding. I have studied about the levees for four years now.

Flooding affects me because if the levees break the water will flood my house. My whole family lives in the flood plains so it affects everyone. The New Year flood affected my family the most because we actually had to move out of our houses in case the levee broke. In order to hold all the water back we relied on the levees to protect us. We have to make sure our levees are in good condition which they aren't.

Use funds to keep the levees in good condition. The levees are not mowed which means animals can make burrows; then, the levees will become weaker. If the levees become weak more sand bars will come up and the levee could possibly break. Funds could also help with getting a sandbagging machine. Since we all live in a small community it's hard to get people to sandbag. Sand bags are used to make the levee higher and to patch weak spots of the levee. Also, wing dikes affect the river a lot! Since all the wing dikes have been put into our stretch of the river flooding has increased. Wing dikes need to be stopped! Our school has had many researchers look at wing dikes and they agree wing dikes are just making the river rise.

Our school is inviting all of you to come to our school to learn more about the levees. If it was not for the levees we would not be able to have school. We all are asking for your help to get more funds for our levees.

Sincerly,

Julian Harris

February 15, 2017.

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant.

I am, Mamatiusupova Begimai Esenzhanovna, from Grand Tower, IL. I live in the bottoms, right by the levees; our town is surrounded by them. Also, we studied at school about the levees. So we know how it helps us.

The levees protect us and farmground from the floading. But, as you know, every 50 years it needs to be rebuilt or, at least, fixed. So, we are asking you to help us save our deteriorated levees. We would be glad to get more locks and seapwells to control the level of the water. Also, the sandbagging machines will help us to make levees higher. These are the main problems.

To learn more from us, we are inviting you to visit our town, or school. Finding more funds, and reforming the federal law that prohibits U rated levees from receiving federal funds would also help us.

Sincerely,

feb 15/17

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Shimpt, Representative Phelps, and Representative Bryant,

My name is Aaron Newell and a attend Shawnee Highschool in Southern Illinois. If you walk over one street from my house you can see the levee that borders the Mississipi river. My teacher, Miss Jammie Nash Mayberry, has taught us of the function and dangers of our decaying levees. Every spring during the rainy season, our levees are tested and we are never sure if our levees will hold up.

Last year, the water got so high that we were no longer if they would hold up. Due to this, everyone had no choice but to pack up and go somewhere safer. Thankfully, the levees held up. But even now, we know that this spring, we will be worrying all over again.

I know that you are only people and

You cannot fix the levees single handedly, but every little bit of effort counts. Weather it be a vote or a speech, we need help from higher Government officials. I'd encourage you to visit our school to hear the story from us. I'd encarage you to look into it in our spare time.

-Sincerely, Alexa Wilke

February 15, 2017

Dear: Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, and Representative Bryant.

My name is Evan Golliher and I am a Junior at Shawnee Jr. Sr. High School. I have lived in Grand Tower, Illinois all of my life. In case you do not know what Grand Tower is, it is a small town that is right next to the Mississippi river. I am writing you because our town is in great danger of becoming a riverbed. Almost every year all of us in Grand Tower have to come together and sandbag when the river starts to rise. Most of the time we end up having to evacuate and leave our homes, not knowing if we are going to have homes to come back to. During the New year flood of 2016 while my family and I were watching the countdown from a hotel room we had our Phones out trying to see if our homes were going to be there when we woke up in the morning. Luckily our town survived the flood, but next time it may not. That is why I am asking for your assistance.

I would like to ask you to help our town and our neighboring towns gain enough funds to help our flood fighting be more successful or not necessary at all. I would like to ask for funds for a sandbagging machine so we can stock pile

Sandbags instead of all of us panicing and having to sandbag while the river is already up high. We also need a storage facility to keep the sandbags we are stockpiling. We also are in need of relief wells to fight sandboils. Also, ingeneral we need funds to help rebuild sections of the leeves that are in severe disrepair.

So I ask of you to please picture yourself in our shoes, would you not give any thing to save the place you grew up in? I hope that you will do all that you can to find funds to assist us in our struggle of keeping our homes and our school safe. I would also like to invite you to our school if you would like to learn more about our situation and how you could help. So please help in any way you can. You could decide whether or not we have a hometown or school next year.

Sincerely,

Evan Boehler

February 15th, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant, my name is Trevor Gale, I go to Shawnee High School, and I live in Grand Tower, IL. I am writing to you to bring awareness to our troubles that affect our town's continued existence because I feel that our struggles have have been ignored for far too long. I know about all of the troubles because I have lived in Grand Tower my whole life and I have experienced the same problems over and over again every time the river rises.

I feel that if we were able to receive funds over time to repair our weakened portions of levees now, it would save more money doing maintenance than trying to replace an entire town. Every time we have issues with the river level being too high, we have to rush to pack up enough sand bags to relieve the stress on our levees. If we had the funds to get things that would help us with bagging the sand and then be able to store them somewhere for when we would need them. By already having them on hand we would just have to go and pick them up and just focus on stopping the water and just making more when we

need them, instead of scurrying to get the bags packed last the last minute.

I feel that with all of the funds to go towards helping repair our broken levees and be able to quickly prepare for any actions needed to protect them. By having the funds we would be able to actualy prepare for floods before they happen and would be able to focus on things besides just bagging sand. I feel like the best way to know how bad the levees are is to have to experience the stress of whether or not you will loose your hometown every time the river begins to rise. So I hope that you can consider making some changes that would benefit us and ease our stress for every time the river rises.

Sincerely,

Trevor Gale.

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

I am Shannon Stanley. I am sixteen years old and I go to Shawnee High School. I live in Wolf Lake, IL. We have been studying about the levees in my dual credit History class for quite some time. Also, I know about the levees of the fact that I live in the "bottoms" as many people call my area.

Living in Wolf Lake has opened my eyes to many things that people from larger places do not have to struggle with. We have very low funding for the levees in my school district. Additionally, the levees in my school district are U rated which means they don't receive federal funding. This is quite redundant because we need funding to fix the levees, yet because they are so bad we don't receive any funding. If you could help us receive funding for the levees we could use the money for many different options, such as, a sandbagging machine, gas for keeping banks on the levees mowed to prevent animals burrowing, relief wells to fight sand boils, improve drainage pipes and locks, and to rebuild portions of the levees where they are too weak.

All of this would be able to help our area for years to come and help save money in the long run by preventing a disaster from occuring. Another situation I would like to address is the wing dike issue. There is nearly 700 wing dikes in Jackson, Union, and Alexander counties. These wing dikes all increase our flood risks, due to the fact that they displace so much of the water in the river.

I hope that you would consider coming to my school to learn more about the levee issues and wing dike situation. I just want to ask that you can try to send more funds for our levee problems and to reform the federal law to allow U rated levees receive federal funds. Please help us fix the levees and decrease the number of wind dikes for our generation and for the generations to come.

Sincerely,

Shannon Stanley

Febuary 14, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representive Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representive Phelps, Representive Phelps.

I am writing this letter to help give Southern Illinois a voice in the fight against the Mighty Mississippi. My name is Bailey Ellis and My hometown is Thebes. My whole life I've been fighting the river my whole life but My hometown is not why im writing. My school, Shawnee District 84 is in the floodplain and the only thing keeping it going is the levees. The only problem is that the levees are 60 years old and they were designed to only last 50 years old.

Living in this area has taught some good life lessons, I want future generations to have the chance I did to grow up here, that is why funds are needed to help repair, replace, or rebuid the crumbling levees. Even something as cheap as a sandbagging machine, or even fuel to mow the levee banks to keep burrowing animals off. Anything you could do to help would be appreciated more than our little community could ever show.

I hope this letter makes you want to look into our problem. The problem could be solved with a vote on a bill stating that since our levees are in such poor shape they can not be repaired. I would like to invite you to our school to learn more about our comunity and our knowledge of the levee system.

Sincerly,

Bailey Ellis

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

Hello, I am just another student from Shawnee Highschool who is in need of a change. The levees in our area are still deteriatry and have lasted 17 years longer then they were made to. Growing up in Weare and East Cape, IL, there is always flooding problems in our area. I know so much about the levees going to Shawnee Highschool. Even though, not all of our teachers here at Shawnee live around our area, but they still care enough to help save our levees. Our teachers teach us a lot about the levees and help us students contact our senators and representatives.

Though I don't live in Grand Tower, I still know how it affects my friends and family. People from Grand Tower know it the worst when it comes to floods. Most of my friends who live

there sandbag two or more times every year. If we had more money we would be able to get a sand bagging Machine. Or if we had more funds, we could have relief wells that helps prevent sand boils, or rebuild parts of the levee that are extremely weak. Anything would be so much help.

Futhermore, it is sad that people have to live in fear worried about the levees bursting. People who don't live around our area have no clue about levees and the fear we have. We invite you to our school to show you how the levees affect us and our lives. Imagine how many lives would be ruined/affected by the levees breaking and destroying our homes. We would sorley appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Jurnee Brown

February 14, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant,

Hello, my name is Taylor Trammel. I am a Senior at Shawnee high school. I live in Grand Tower, IL. I am writing today because I am worried about our levees. We have studied this issue for almost three years now. Also, just from living in Grand Tower I see it with my own eyes. It is a very threating issue. I do not want to lose my family, friends and town if the levees would to breaking or failing.

The levees are their mid 60's. The levees have held up longer than they were built for. If we could get a storage shed to store the sand bagging machine and the sand bags. The storage shed would be good because when the water started to rise they would have sand bags ready. Another thing is gas for the levees to be moved to keep the animals from burrowing in the levee. We could improve on the drainage pipes and locks to help the levees. To rebuild parts of the levee would also help. The wing dikes are increasing

have loosed at many of Sources.

The federal law that prohibits unratcd levees from receiving federal funds. If they would pass it then we could get federal funding. If you all would like to come and visit our school that would be wonderful. We could teach you about what we know about the levees. Even we could take you and show the levees. We will take all the help we can get.

Sincerely,

Taylor Trammel

Febuary 14, 2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, and Representative Bryant.

Hi my name is Kelsi Cannaco, I am a Senior at Shawnee High School, and from Wolf Lake, IL. I am writting to you all because our Levee's are in bad shape and we need Your help. We have written to You guys before about getting help with our Levee's, but we never heard back from Anyone. If You guys could help us out With Levee's, that would mean so much to us. Our Levee's are 117 years old, and could break at anytime. We know our Information because half of us are Surrounded by Levee's, and we have Studied it as well.

The Levee's affect us down here in the bottoms, because if they break, our School, and towns will be destroyed along with People loosing their Family and their own lives. None of us want that. You guys are Probably going to be Curious why we don't want that Correct? We don't want that because we have our Small towns, Everyone is Family around here and always have been.

We want to Save our levees. The only way we Can Save them is by getting help, and Putting new locks in, and Even rebuild it. Also get rid of the bars in the levees. The wing dikes in our Stretch of the river is also increasing flood heights which makes the levees Even worse. Please help us Save our levees, and our home towns.

We would like to invite you on to Shawnee High School so we Can talk more to you about the levees, and tell you what kind of help we actually need. If you guys would Contact us back that would be nice. We would like to know what you guys have to Say about our Levees as well. If we had money to fix the Levees we would totally get new Sandbagging machine, gas for keeping banks mowed, Relief wells to Fight the Sand Boils, get brand new drainage Pipes and locks, and Even rebuild the levees where there is a weak spot.

Sincerely,

Kelsi Comack.

Febuary 15, 2017

Dear senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth Rep. Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Rep. Phelps, Rep. Bryant

I am writing you today to plead for help, my School and my home have been in great danger for some years now. I am asking you to help not just me but the whole string of southern towns that our terrible awefull broken un fixable levees protect, I have wrote to you guys befor many times, All We are asking is for your help to bring in some money for our Levees.

This area is know for farming and if we cant plant and produce that will damage our economy. We need your support on rebuilding our home. We need protection from flooding. 2016 New year was the first time I ever evacuate That was the first time it truely hit me that this area is in danger, All Im asking for is if you can help with fixing it

Extra money at all please please, A
desperet Seniorneeds your help to save
his town, school, and home

Sincerely,

February 15,2017

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant

Hi, I am Abigail Cripps from Grand Tower, Illnois. I am writing to you to tell you a little about our levees and how they are failing. Our sixty-seven year old levees are testing their limits over the past few years when the water rises. If these levees are to break then hundreds will then lose their homes including several family members and friends. Many people could even lose their lives.

There also would be so many businesses that would be lost. We have studied about the levees for years to learn even more of what we know from living here in the bottoms. Every time the water rises there is an even greater chance of a flood. I have lived in this area for seventeen years and do not want to lose my home, family, or friends.

We have tried through tax referedum. We have had several funraisers. We have even volunteered local labor on the levees. We are running out of options within our reach. Please we ask you to take the time to understand the issue, come to a levee meetung. Also, please come to our school so we can give you more information on our levees. Please also come to our funraisers. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Abigail Cripps

Abigail Cripps

Febuary 15, 2017

Dear,
Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Representative Bost, Senator Fowler, Senator Schimpf, Representative Phelps, Representative Bryant.

My name is Kashe Mouser, a previous resident of McClure and a lifelong resident of the Shawnee district. Here at Shawnee District 84 we have studied the levees and the slow disenagration of our levees. I have never lived in the flood plain, but my family and the ones I hold dearest to my heart could potentially lose their homes, or their lives due to the raging river that burdens this area. The great people that call Sothern Illinois their home have fought the levees breaking for decades and it is only getting worse.

Every year we face the fact that we could lose everything. Our school, our economy, due to the loss of residents in the area, we would lose valve, we would be nothing, but barren ghost towns. The river continues to rise and the threat rises along side it.

Sincerely,

Josh Moore

