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May 10, 2006

Red River Valley Water Supply Project
 Bureau of Reclamation
 P.O. Box 1017
 Bismarck ND 58502-1017

Sirs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

I list my concerns as follows:

1. I am concerned about the quantity and volume of water that remains available for the use of our Tribe, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation. I am not aware of the Corps' technique or method used to determine the level of sediment in the lake bed, but I am aware that sedimentation is steadily creating a shallower bed for Lake Sakakawea. Further study must be made to take sediment encroachment into consideration as water volume is calculated for Lake Sakakawea. The results of this study must be used to determine the availability of water in Lake Sakakawea for the RRVWSP.
2. Prior to any further allocation of Missouri River water, including the water in Lake Sakakawea, water rights of Missouri River Tribes should be quantified to ensure use and availability for the needs of future generations.
3. One of the justifications to build the proposed RRVWSP has been based on availability of water in eastern North Dakota should a 1930s-style drought strike our state. Considering all the water the eastern end of the state receives during spring runoff, if that part of the state is experiencing severe drought conditions, we here in the western part of the state will be experiencing even harsher conditions. A drought preclude must be negotiated and a determination made to ensure water takings will not be allowed should Lake Sakakawea reach pre-determined levels due to drought conditions.
4. I am also very concerned about contaminants contained in sediments of Lake Sakakawea. It is a fact that contaminants like lead, arsenic, and mercury are captured by the heavy sediments in Missouri River water. The disruption and release into the water supply of these contaminated sediments increases

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5. exponentially with decreasing water levels in Lake Sakakawea, and I am concerned about the amounts and types of chemicals needed to treat higher levels of heavy metals, agricultural pesticides and herbicides, and other contaminants that are carried to Lake Sakakawea by surface water sources. Both the contaminants and the chemicals needed to treat them have already been shown to have dangerous implications for the human, animal and plant populations that depend on the water in Lake Sakakawea. Further study about the impacts of lower lake levels and increases in sediment-captured and other contaminants must be considered before this project is allowed to move ahead.

This concludes my comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Red River Valley Water Supply Project. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Danks, Sr." in a cursive style.

John Danks, Sr.
Elder and Enrolled Member
Three Affiliated Tribes