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March 3, 2006

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

Mr. Michael J. Ryan:

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After reviewing the Executive Summary of the DEIS on the above water supply project and attending a public forum at Bemidji State University on 2/16/06, I find that I must comment on the draft. Some of what I state I realize may offend agencies and governments, but that is not my intent, but rather to present my views as a concerned citizen regarding the disruption of the environment and ecosystem of our area/region.

The federal government, the State of Minnesota, Beltrami County, city of Bemidji, and on to the North Dakota and Canadian borders, has been getting free water for at least 400 years from the great nation of Red Lake, the Ojibwe Nation. Through the rivers of Red Lake, Blackduck, Tamarack, Battle River, Rice, and other little outlets and rivers, water has flowed out free for use by the population. It is only the townships and cities where the county, state, and federal charge for use of water. I have been a resident of the city of Bemidji since January 1973 and have been paying water fees since. The biggest supplier in our region and state, the Red Lake Nation is not and never has been compensated for the water resource. From the time the European immigrant invaded this area, they have committed environmental, social, political, economic, scientific, health and religious genocide on the indigenous of this area and the nation, all in the name of progress, greed, control, money, and power. The natives of this area are saying, "Hold on, we have a stake in this". This is something that was given to us to take care of, entrusted in our care and we need to take things into consideration slowly, as diverting water from Minnesota's water tables to supply another disturbs the balance of nature and ecosystem.

The unbalancing of the water system of the Red Lake Nation by the federal government under the auspices of the Army Corps of Engineers, was ⁷³been done without the consultation and approval of the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe. It is sad and a shame to note that Beltrami County and the State of Minnesota view the Red Lake reservation as a burden on taxpayers when indeed it is the other way around.

Nature pretty much takes care of itself. When humans start messing around with the system they generally make a mess of things. The dams and anything else that would be built to supply another area would have an adverse effect to this area, would deplete the water table for this region, do harm to the wildlife habitat and introduce foreign species to this region, so I am opposed to any proposal that would divert more water from this region. The areas that you say need the water are areas where there is flooding just about every year, so why not use the millions of dollars you talk about to capture the runoff and

put that to use rather than take from another area. To me this is more feasible because the labor force in that area would benefit, the economy of the area would benefit, and there would be little disruption to wildlife habitat and the environment of the proposed affected areas, and can also foster cooperation and goodwill between states, communities, cities, and the two nations of Canada and Red Lake. We all have a choice as to where we live and work, and we generally make choices on what is available in that area. While it is true there is no paradise on earth, we adapt to what is in life based on availability of the area, or we can choose not to live there. Then again when money, power, and greed enter into the picture, there is no end to what humankind will do to "rape" the environment. Hasn't humankind done enough damage to our Earth?

On a miscellaneous note on the DEIS, the draft needs to be made more people/user friendly so that the contents can be readily understood. Some of the terms in the draft are such that it would take university educated engineers to decipher. Being a university graduate, I found myself using a dictionary to look up the meaning of some terms used in the DEIS. It should not have terms foreign to the person on the street, although I would venture to guess that the average person would be more cognizant of the environment than the college/university graduate would. It does not take a rocket scientist to decipher proposed potential damage to the environment. I might also note that in the early years of the formation of this region by the European immigrant, a foreign language was used to "steal" our land and resources. How different today is in that the federal government has many interpreters when they are dealing with other nations so as to deal diplomatically with them. It's a shame the same respect was not afforded to the indigenous of this land.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the DEIS. I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to give very serious consideration to their proposals as there are many players, the environment and wildlife that will be affected. I will cc this letter to various elected officials of this region.

Sincerely,



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