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STATE OF MISSOURI  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Matt Blunt, Governor • Doyle Childers, Director

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OCT 18 2006

Red River Valley Water Supply Project EIS  
Attention: Dennis Breitzman  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Dakotas Area Office  
P. O. Box 1017  
Bismarck, ND 58502

Dear Mr. Breitzman:

I am writing to submit additional comments from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Red River Valley Water Supply. One issue that has strained the Bureau's credibility is the Bureau's greatly inflated estimate of future population growth. A recent demographic study raises additional doubts about the accuracy of Bureau's work in this area.

The study, completed at the request of the local Council of Governments, not only supports our earlier comments, but heightens our concerns that the Bureau is planning to overbuild infrastructure rather than simply meeting the needs of those in the basin. The Bureau, in its Needs and Options Study, estimated that Cass County would grow at a rate of roughly 1.6 % between 2000 and 2050 (Scenario 1). The current study contains a much lower estimate with 1.1% until 2020 and only 0.6% after 2020. The significant overestimate of the population in the Bureau's Needs and Options Study and Draft EIS raises questions about the justification for an out-of-basin diversion.

This study also raises serious concerns about the ability of those in the basin to pay their share of the costs without having to raise water rates so high as to inhibit growth. Recent field hearings saw this very issue raised by those in the basin. By overestimating demand, the Bureau threatens those in the basin with a water supply too costly for its citizens to afford. Ironically, this could serve to further reduce growth in the basin.

The study cited predicts that birth rates will drop in the basin as the population ages. This department had previously raised this issue with the Bureau, to no avail. It is also interesting to note that the article mentions other locations in the valley as the source of in-migration to Fargo. As those population drop, as predicted even in the Bureau's population estimates, the rate of growth of Fargo and Grand Forks will be reduced, unless some additional, external factor changes the demographics of the region.

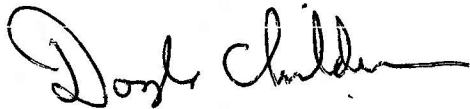
Dennis Breitzman

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This department strongly encourages the Bureau to acquire this study and to incorporate its new population estimates into the Final EIS. The newer study is far more likely to reflect future conditions than the Bureau's study in which additional population was seen as a justification for an out-of-basin diversion.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Doyle Childers".

Doyle Childers  
Director

DC:jej