



February 25, 2014

TO: Iowa Flood Mitigation Board

FROM: Mark Murphy, Mayor, City of Cherokee

RE: Flood Mitigation Funding

It is my understanding that the Flood Mitigation Board, as established by Chapter 418 of the Code of Iowa, is to meet on Friday, February 28, 2014 to consider recommendations for appropriations for the Flood Mitigation Fund to finance flood prevention and mitigation projects incurred as a result of flooding in Iowa's smaller cities. The City of Cherokee is currently developing an application to Iowa Homeland Security for FEMA mitigation dollars to acquire residential properties along Railroad Creek and the Little Sioux River floodplains. The City Council would have preferred to seek FEMA dollars for flood prevention upstream within the Railroad Creek basin rather than a buyout program; however Cherokee was told that FEMA mitigation dollars were currently only available for buyout programs.

Buyout dollars will only address one-third of the residential housing stock impacted by the flash flooding that occurred in 2010 and again in 2013. The balance of single family structures (40 to 50 homes) will be impacted by future flash flooding events, so long as flood prevention structures are not built upstream on the Railroad Creek basin. Cherokee County NRCS offices have completed significant study of Railroad Creek basin. It has documented the nine different flood events that have occurred over the past century. It has located existing flood retention structures and has identified the type and location of future structures that would slow flood waters and minimize damages downstream in Cherokee.

State of Iowa flood mitigation funding would provide the impetus necessary to significantly reduce the threat of flooding. Some limited buyout of structures most directly in the path of floodwaters is necessary. However buyout of structures in other parts of the floodplain would not be necessary if flood prevention upstream would be implemented. These same structures would be able to continue to serve the low and moderate income housing needs for years to come --- rather than spending tax dollars acquiring and demolishing these same units.

The City of Cherokee strongly encourages the Iowa Flood Mitigation Board to recommend full funding of the Iowa Mitigation Fund to assist Cherokee and other similar smaller cities throughout Iowa in minimizing the threat of future flood disasters. The Railroad Creek basin project would need three million dollars to effectively reduce flooding downstream. Please support all efforts to provide funding for this important cause. Copies of this letter will be distributed to our Congressional delegation in anticipation of your recommendation for funding to the Governor.

Thank you for your consideration.

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