

OPENING STATEMENT

Today, we are holding a hearing to conduct oversight of the Army Corps of Engineers’ management of the 2019 Missouri River Basin flooding—flooding that has caused at least \$1.6 billion in damages in Iowa. I want to emphasize that this hearing is NOT just in the past tense...this is an ongoing disaster—people are hurting, the floodwaters are still in homes and neighborhoods, and lives have yet to be rebuilt. I want to thank Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper for recognizing the importance of this issue and giving me the opportunity to chair this field hearing in Iowa, just down the road from Montgomery County, where I have spent most of my life. It’s one thing to have a hearing on an important topic like this in D.C.—but it’s that much better to be able to bring the hearing to the people most impacted.

It’s nice to see so many familiar faces here today. Many of you have lived along the Missouri, for most, if not all of your lives. You’ve lived through these devastating flood events and

want answers from the Corps about how it manages the river and how it plans to prevent flood events in the future.

This committee has oversight over much of the Corps' activities, including flood risk management and dam operations, and today, Corps officials will respond to our most pressing questions. Having your farmland, homes, and businesses flooded out every few years cannot become a "fact of life" for folks who live in the vicinity of the Missouri River. This trend of flood and rebuild, flood and rebuild must end. If \$1.6 billion plus in damages to our state is the best the Corps can do in a situation like this—that is simply unacceptable.

I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge our two Iowa witnesses here today: Hamburg Mayor Cathy Crain and Fremont County farmer and community advocate Leo Ettleman. I'd have a hard time thinking of any better witnesses to provide their perspectives on this particular topic. Both know the river as well as anyone and have been on the front lines of flood events and river management issues over the years. The flood waters in Hamburg still haven't fully receded, and Mayor Crain has been working around the clock to help with the recovery effort. I thank her for being willing to testify today, as her voice is an

important one for this committee and the Corps to hear. Leo is a sixth generation farmer from Fremont County and has been active in all things related to the management of the Missouri. I look forward to hearing their testimony later this morning. I also want to acknowledge the state and local officials in attendance, including Governor Kim Reynolds. Thank you all for being here.

The conversation we'll have this morning is only one conversation in a broader dialogue about solutions that will help Iowans and all folks impacted in the Midwest. I'm hopeful that what we learn from today's hearing will help shed light on what those solutions may be.