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### Nelson Continues Oversight of Feds' Flood Management

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The following is a press release from Senator Nelson:

Yesterday, Nebraska's Senator Ben Nelson told officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that Nebraskans are counting on timely assistance and thorough communication throughout this season of heavy flooding along the Missouri and Platte rivers.

"I'm continuing to keep close tabs on the flooding, on federal efforts to manage and minimize its impact and to make sure Nebraskans receive the resources they need," said Senator Nelson. "Nebraskans deserve timely and effective aid, and federal officials must do a better job of communicating with the public about flood issues until the floodwaters recede."

At a Senate Agriculture Committee hearing today, Nelson urged agriculture officials in various agencies to work closely together to deliver aid to Nebraska farmers and communities affected by the flooding.

Dallas Tonsager, undersecretary for rural development, said his agency can help refinance homes, rebuild sewer systems and refinance businesses that are inundated.

Michael Scuse, acting undersecretary for farm and foreign agriculture services, said that producers can access emergency loans, emergency conservation aid and crop insurance.

"Given the fact that high water is going to go on for another six weeks and longer, I hope that fatigue doesn't set in within your agency," Nelson told them. "Certainly, it is being felt by a lot of those who are directly affected. It won't be easy. It's not a typical flood."

Also today, Nelson received an update on the floods from Army Corps of Engineers Brig. Gen. John McMahon, who oversees the Missouri River Basin. Nelson told McMahon that the Corps must undertake an assessment of its procedures and actions leading up to flooding this year, so it can minimize flooding in the future.

In the near term, Nelson encouraged McMahon and his agency to ramp up communication to the public about the Corps' flood management efforts, flood impact assessments, and its outlook for possible flooding of communities and key facilities, including Nebraska's nuclear power plants near Blair and Brownville.

"People are concerned about the Corps' management of water in reservoirs and releases from upriver dams, about the strength of levees all along the Missouri River, and the potential for flooding at the Cooper and Fort Calhoun nuclear power plants," said Nelson. "I pressed Gen. McMahon to be as forthcoming as possible. I believe he understands the value of keeping Nebraskans informed throughout this season of historic flooding."

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