

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2009

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
US Department of Agriculture
400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write regarding the importance of federal funding for the rehabilitation of Dam 24 in the Wakarusa Watershed Joint District No. 35, better known as Yankee Tank Dam. The watershed district has put forth an application for \$1 million in federal financial and technical assistance to make upgrades to the dam through the USDA/NRCS Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

The rehabilitation of the Yankee Tank Dam is a top priority of the region. When the dam was constructed in 1974, the land both upstream and downstream was primarily farmland or pastureland. Thus, it was constructed as a low-hazard dam. However, suburban development above and below the dam has led the Kansas Division of Water Resources to reclassify the dam as high-hazard.

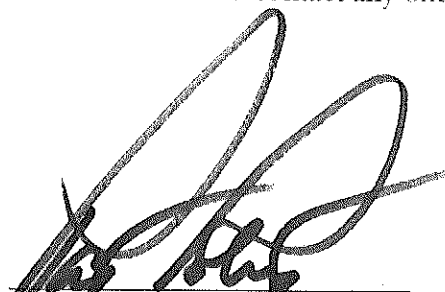
The growth of the city of Lawrence into the areas above and below Yankee Tank Dam has placed a significant amount of development in harm's way should the dam be breached. In the case of a dam breach, homes, apartment buildings, sports complexes, major city streets and Kansas Highway 10 would be inundated by water.


The requested funding would be used to evaluate the project, determine the most cost effective alternative, design and finally construct the chosen alternative. Possibilities include armoring the spillway with concrete or widening the auxiliary spillway.

We urge your consideration of this request for funding in FY 2010. Please feel free to contact any one of us or Joshua Lewis at 202-225-6601 for more information.

Sincerely,


Sam Brownback


Pat Roberts


Lynn Jenkins


Dennis Moore