

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 19, 2019

The Honorable R.D. James
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
U.S. Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C., 20310-0108

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20503

Dear Assistant Secretary James and Director Mulvaney:

We write in support of the Boise River flood risk reduction project that runs through Garden City, Ada County, Idaho. We urge you to allocate funding through the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) 2020 Work Plan and President's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request to begin a General Investigation (GI) study on this critical flood risk reduction project. The project is estimated to protect 11,000 residents, 2,000 businesses, and millions of dollars of property. Not only would the project benefit Garden City, but properties in the City of Boise and in unincorporated Ada County would be protected as well.

The City of Garden City has an estimated population of 12,000 people in an urban area surrounded by the City of Boise.

Mapping updates of the Lower Boise River conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identified several locations throughout Garden City that are prone to flooding. The maps anticipate that 74 percent of Garden City's properties are either in the floodplain or floodway and there is a 76 percent chance of flooding in a 70-year time frame. It is very probable that a major flood event could occur any year. These vulnerabilities were reinforced during a minor flood event in 2017 when several areas were affected by the increased flows.

A community with three-fourths of its properties, including a large stock of structures, below the anticipated flood level is extremely vulnerable in the event of a flood. Flowing and standing water throughout the City would damage infrastructure, houses, and businesses, and poses threats to life and safety.

In addition to the actual hazard risk, the FEMA maps have an economic impact on Garden City. All insurable structures within the floodplain or floodway are required to have flood insurance if there is a federally-backed mortgage on the structure. Many of the structures were built prior to the estimated base flood elevation (BFE), and are built below the BFE. Structures built below the BFE are subject to extremely high flood insurance premiums. It is estimated that flood insurance premiums have cost Garden City and the community millions of dollars in increased flood insurance premiums. These high insurance premiums likely have led to decreased property values throughout Garden City.

To start addressing this situation, USACE partnered with Garden City in 2018 under the Continuing Authorities Program, Section 205. During the feasibility study, it was determined that the needs exceed the program's cost authority. Subsequently, the City of Garden City submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI), dated April 8, 2019, seeking Corps assistance under the General Investigation (GI) authority. The LOI states that the City is willing and able to partner in a cost-shared project and fully understands the responsibilities required of a non-federal sponsor.

We respectfully request that you initiate a GI study to reduce flood risk on the Boise River through the City of Garden City, Ada County, Idaho by providing a new study start designation for the project and allocating funding through the 2020 Work Plan and President's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request. Addressing flood risks at this location is integral to the safety and economy of the City of Garden City and could have important environmental benefits as well.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

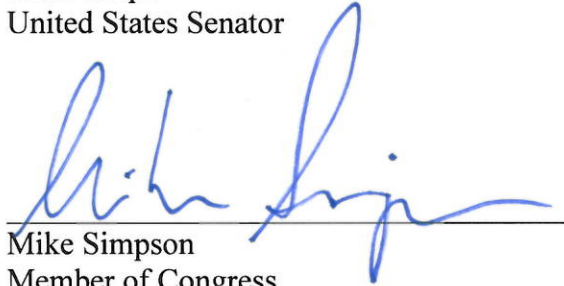
Sincerely,



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Mike Simpson
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress