



February 21, 2023

Re: Garrison Dam EA

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
CENWO-PMA-C
Attn: Clayton Ridenour
1616 Capitol Avenue
Omaha, NE 68102-4901

Dear Mr. Ridenour,

The Izaak Walton League of America appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment for Garrison Dam. This completes the Dam Safety Modification Study and identifies an alternative to reduce safety risks. The League is a conservation organization with over 42,000 members in more than 200 chapters across the country. Many of our members live in the basin and enjoy spending time on the Missouri River.

Garrison Dam is classified as a Dam Safety Action Classification 2, due to six potential modes that could result in failure of the approximately 70-year-old spillway. The safety risks were identified after the record 2011 flood, the only time this spillway has been used. Although the risk of a failure is highly unlikely, we commend the Corps for conducting this assessment and considering modifications to increase the safety of human life and downstream infrastructure.

The possible alternatives include 4 plans, counting the No Action Alternative. The alternatives were evaluated on their effectiveness at reducing the safety risk and the cost efficiency of the plan.

Alternative 12 was identified as the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) to reduce the chance of a catastrophic spillway failure. The League supports selection of the TSP and we're pleased the plan is not expected to adversely affect federally listed species or their designated critical habitat or historic properties.

Moving forward we urge the Corps to:

- Continue consultation with Native American Tribes.
- Comply with the Clean Water Act.
- Have minimal impact on water quality.
- Restore the vegetation, wetlands, and habitats impacted during construction.

The TSP carries a significant price tag. However, failure of the Garrison embankment or spillway would be catastrophic for 11 states and over 2,000 river miles from North Dakota to Mississippi. The economic loss could exceed \$100 billion from an embankment breach and \$10 to \$100 billion from a spillway breach. We urge the Corps to actively seek the federal appropriations needed for this critical dam safety project.

Finally, in our review of the Draft EA we request that you correct this sentence. On page 46 (or page 58/123) in section 2.4 - Tribal, Agency, and Public Input (Scoping) it states: “The Corps received one comment from this public scoping period, a litter of support in favor of the draft measures and alternatives form the Izaak Walton League of America.”

We believe you meant it to read a “letter” of support “from” the Izaak Walton League of America. We would ask this be corrected if this is referenced in future documents.

The Izaak Walton League of America again thanks you for this opportunity to comment on the potential alternatives for the Garrison Dam project. We respectfully request to be kept informed on all future developments on this effort including the appropriations process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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