



**NEWS**

**From the Illinois State Senate**

**State Senator John Sullivan, 47th Legislative District**

**For Immediate Release: November 30, 2012**

*Low water levels on Mississippi affect barge traffic, agri-business*

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** - State Senator John Sullivan (D-Rushville) proposed a resolution, which the Senate adopted Thursday, calling on President Obama to declare an emergency and keep the Mississippi River open to barge traffic. Following this summer's extreme drought, water levels on the river remain low, potentially hindering Illinois farmers' ability to transport their crops to market via barge.

"Barge traffic on the Mississippi is absolutely essential to our state's economy," Sen. Sullivan said. "Unless the Army Corps of Engineers acts to keep the Mississippi at an adequate level, a complete stoppage of barge traffic is possible. That would be detrimental to our farmers, who were already struggling on account of the drought."

Farmers, shippers, food processing companies and other businesses are concerned the Corps' recent decision to restrict the flow of water from the Missouri River into the Mississippi River will exacerbate the drought's effect on water levels and close the Mississippi to commercial navigation. Sen. Sullivan was contacted by his local Schuyler County Farm Bureau and is working with other county Farm Bureaus to urge the federal government to stop restricting the water flow and, if needed, expedite dredging and rock pinnacle removal to keep the channel open.

"This situation has the potential to affect not just Illinois' farming community but a wide array of businesses dependent on this vital transportation link," Sen. Sullivan said. "It is significant that legislators are presenting a united front in asking the federal government to act now to avert a possible economic disaster."

The House will have an opportunity to adopt Senate Joint Resolution 80 when its members return to Springfield next week.

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