

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 6, 2012

The Honorable Steven L. Beshear  
Governor of Kentucky  
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

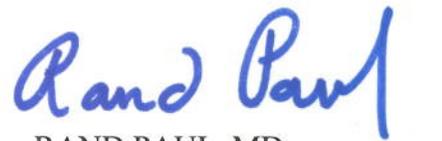
Dear Governor Beshear:

We write to you regarding the hazardously low water levels on the drought stricken Mississippi River and the looming crisis affecting Kentucky's shipping, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors. As you are aware, commercial traffic on this critically important waterway could come to a complete halt in coming days unless action is taken by the Army Corps of Engineers. If no mitigating action is taken and commercial traffic were to stop, countless Kentucky jobs that rely on the heavily traversed Mississippi River to transport fuel, coal, agricultural and manufactured products would be severely impacted. We are informed that shipment of over \$7 billion in goods on the Mississippi River could be blocked over the coming months due to this entirely avoidable event.

The Army Corps of Engineers maintains that it is unable to act unilaterally to mitigate this situation before commercial traffic on the river is affected. As such, we respectfully note that you—as a Governor—have exclusive authority under section 501(a) of the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. § 5191) to request a formal federal disaster declaration from the President. Such a federal disaster declaration request from you could trigger a response from the Obama Administration that aids Kentucky communities and families whose livelihoods will no doubt be adversely affected by the shutdown of commercial traffic on the Mississippi River. Should you elect to use the available tool of a Stafford Act 501(a) disaster declaration request, we stand ready to render any support or assistance necessary to attempt to prevent this economically devastating scenario from impacting the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this request.

  
MITCH McCONNELL  
UNITED STATES SENATOR

  
RAND PAUL, MD  
UNITED STATES SENATOR