



City of Omaha
Mike Fahey, Mayor

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September 14, 2004

Senator Chuck Hagel
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator E. Benjamin Nelson
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Lee Terry
1524 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Omaha Superfund Listing

Gentlemen:

I spoke with Governor Johanns last Friday and he stated that he is not optimistic the Superfund money for Omaha lead cleanup will be available anytime in the foreseeable future. This lack of funding will cause an immense hardship on the people of North and South Omaha, who have already suffered from lead problems for far too long. I write to ask for your immediate intervention with the Administration and appropriate Congressional Committees to reverse this situation and insure that the funds are forthcoming.

When I wrote Governor Johanns on January 11, 2002 to request the Superfund listing, I stated that the "availability of Superfund money" was one of the issues that concerned me, but after assurances from the EPA that the funds would be available, I agreed to support the listing. I wrote the Governor again on February 26, 2002 indicating that a New York Times article (Seelye, February 24, 2002) stated the Bush Administration was "targeting fewer sites for restoration..." and that the Superfund trust was "running out of money." I asked the Governor to "seek reassurance from the Bush Administration and

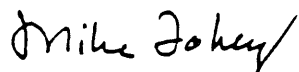
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EPA that our project will remain the highest priority of the region,” and to reconfirm the timeline. I wrote the Governor in July of 2002, saying that the Omaha World-Herald (July 2, 2002) reported that the Bush Administration planned to “reduce spending for the nation’s Superfund program,” and again asked that he confirm the funding and timeline. And I wrote just last month that an August 17, 2004 New York Times article (Barringer) stated that dozens of Superfund sites “are likely to be granted nothing or a fraction of what their managers say is needed because of a budget shortfall that could exceed \$250 million.” The article cited Omaha as one of the projects that may not be funded. Finally, the September 7, 2004 Wall Street Journal states that the cost of restoring the nation’s most toxic waste sites is estimated at \$750 million, and the EPA “projects it will lack the funds.” Again, the Omaha site is specifically mentioned in the article.

Until my conversation with the Governor last Friday, I have never been told we would not get the funding. In fact, notwithstanding the press reports noted above, the EPA has repeatedly indicated that the project was moving forward. Had we known this would be the outcome, we would never have agreed to the Superfund listing in the first place. But we are listed and the 16,000 Omaha families with contaminated yards deserve the promised cleanup. Frankly gentlemen, we were told we would get this funding and we expect it. I am looking to you, as well as Governor Johanns, to do whatever is necessary to secure it. I am available to meet with you and Administration officials in Washington at your direction.

Please contact me regarding this matter immediately.

Sincerely,



Mike Fahey, Mayor
City of Omaha

C: Governor Mike Johanns