

Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Fax: (202) 366-2191

Dear Secretary Buttigieg –

Welcome to Michigan - - you may be aware of the dam failures impacting tens of thousands of Michiganders. We write today in your capacity on President Bidens' cabinet.

On May 19, 2020, both the Edenville and Sanford dams breached. While there was property loss, thanks to our first responders there was no loss of life. Immediately after the breach, both Secord and Smallwood dams, built at the same time about 100 years ago, were deemed unsafe by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and subsequently drawn down. The 4 Lakes were gone in a matter of hours.

The event of May 2020 was not a natural disaster. The failure of the dams was decades in the making. Federal agencies had oversight the past 3 decades, while the private owner did not comply with numerous requests to maintain the dams. When Boyce Hydro was fined \$15 Million (after going bankrupt), it was too little, too late.

Thanks to a grant from the State of Michigan, and other Federal and private financial support, we are 3-1/2 years into rebuilding. We appreciate the leadership of the volunteers with the Four Lakes Task Force. As property owners, we pay an annual special assessment towards management of the dams, and will continue to do so to support Operations, Maintenance and Repairs to help make sure another disaster does not occur.

As we continue the construction phase to rebuild the 4 dams, cost estimates from just 3 years ago have doubled. The culprits are a market flush with projects due to Federal infrastructure spending causing upward pricing pressure, compounding annual double-digit inflation, and escalating interest rates. While these factors impact all of us, and its human nature to blame others, no one working on this project is responsible for creating this 'triple threat'.

Property owners along these lakes were not at fault for this disaster. Rather, the dam owner, under the oversight of FERC, did not implement the mandated repairs / upgrades to meet dam safety requirements.

To help reduce costs for all property owners, we seek Federal construction grants to the Four Lakes Special Assessment District of \$200 Million to help rebuild without undue financial hardship on property owners. While we are willing to help, demonstrated by our annual assessment for Operations / Maintenance, property owners should not be responsible for a lack of oversight by the regulators authorized to maintain the safety of these dams over the prior 30 years.

As a member of the Presidents' Cabinet, and a Michigander, how can you help secure additional Federal grants to help us rebuild the mid-Michigan dams?

Sincerely,

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY STATE ZIP