

of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

BARR HEARING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, we have now had a day where the Attorney General testified before the Judiciary Committee, and many issues are not resolved because there are great discrepancies based on Mr. Mueller's letter that has been made public—two letters, in fact, that have been made public between what Mr. Barr has been saying and what Mr. Mueller believes.

The cloud that hangs over our country because of Russian interference in our elections—and, frankly, that hangs over the President because of the actions Mr. Mueller outlined in his report—remains. There is a great need to clear all of that up and to clear all of it up with no ands, ifs, or buts.

I was shocked when I heard the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, my friend and colleague whom I have traveled with, LINDSEY GRAHAM, come out of the hearing and say that he was not going to call Mueller for a hearing. The fact that he on his own, despite the desires of many other members of the committee, would simply say that Mueller is not going to testify was so outrageous and wrong. So I went to my colleague here on the floor—my friend LINDSEY GRAHAM. I said to him: How can you do this? This is outrageous.

He said: I am just going to ask Mr. Mueller in a letter if Barr said anything misleading or inaccurate but not have the hearing.

I was appalled.

Now I see on a tweet by a reporter, Emma Dumain, that LINDSEY GRAHAM has slightly modified what he has said. He said that if Mueller tells GRAHAM in the letter that Barr said anything misleading or inaccurate today, he would have the hearing. That is not good enough. That is a game. He should not put the onus on Mr. Mueller, a straight arrow, somebody who believes in a chain of command, to publicly state that in a letter.

Mueller should come testify—no ands, ifs, or buts. Mueller should come testify—no games as to what he answers in a letter.

What are our colleagues so afraid of on the other side of the aisle? Are they afraid Mueller might say things that are different than what Attorney General Barr said? Are they afraid for the country to discuss the kinds of things the President has done, which nobody much seems to like? Are they afraid that we talk about foreign interference in our elections?

I would plead with my colleague LINDSEY GRAHAM to reconsider. I would plead with my colleague LINDSEY GRAHAM to say: Mueller is coming; no ands, ifs, or buts so we can question him, including our side of the aisle. That is what Congressional oversight is about. It is not about the chairman of the Judiciary Committee deciding what

should be heard and what should not be heard. That is not the job of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, no matter who he or she is.

Special Counsel Mueller just concluded one of the most important investigations in our Nation's history. The Senate and the American people have a right to hear from the special counsel directly about the threat of foreign interference in our elections and, yes, the conduct of the President. It is one of the biggest takeaways from the hearing; that we need the special counsel here to testify, to clarify the discrepancies between what he and the Attorney General are saying. We don't need a letter. We don't need conditions. That seems like a game, a dodge, a ruse, a way to prevent Mr. Mueller from testifying.

In my view, Attorney General Barr routinely mischaracterizes the special counsel's words, his intentions, his reasoning. We know, from the special counsel's letter that was publicly released, that to be true. It is likely that Attorney General Barr did so again in the hearings. We need to hear from the special counsel himself to sort this out and get the truth, not at the discretion of the Judiciary Committee chairman but because America, our system of government, our rule of law, demands it.

Congress has always had, from the days of the Founding Fathers, a duty to provide oversight for the executive branch. Just because one party doesn't feel like doing it because the President is from the same party doesn't measure up to the grandness of our Constitution.

My dear friend from South Carolina, please rethink your position. Back off of this idea that Mueller shouldn't testify or should only testify if he meets certain conditions only set by you and call Special Counsel Mueller in to testify.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

MISSOURI FLOODING

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, we have been stuck for some time now on having an appropriations bill that meets the disasters that have occurred recently in Missouri and, before that, in the Carolinas and Georgia, and other places. I want to continue to work hard to get that done, but I want to talk a little bit about the effects of what has happened in the State of Missouri as part of what has happened with floods this spring.

We have seen catastrophic and, in some cases, historic flooding both on the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers over the last couple of months. Along the Missouri, there was this unusual thing, and I actually never heard the term before, a "bomb cyclone." It is a wind event that also produced lots of rain in Nebraska in the Northern Plains on frozen ground. All of that water had no place to go except run off, and it was the equivalent of 8 inches of

rain in a place from which we usually don't get water. There had been significant rain over the last few days of March. That created another flood. On the Mississippi, we have seen significant rains there. While they haven't set a record, they have certainly consistently ranked the Mississippi crests among the seventh highest flood levels that river has ever been from some of the locks. There are locks north of St. Louis. You can navigate the river without locks south of St. Louis, but in the area from the Canton Lock and Dam to the Winfield Lock and Dam on the Mississippi, there are significant problems waiting to happen over the next few weeks.

After the rains occurred in Northwest Missouri and in Iowa and Nebraska, in our State and Kansas, much of the water is still there. The floods have stayed up so high for so long that it is difficult to really evaluate the damage that has been done. Unlike a tornado, which we have some familiarity with, where you can go in quickly and evaluate what happened, you can't do that nearly as quickly with a flood.

We do know there has been at least \$25 million in damages to public infrastructure and costs of emergency measures experienced statewide. There have been 215 road closures statewide, with 46 roads that continue to be closed as late as the third week in April. Interstate 29, north of St. Joseph, has been closed since March and is expected to stay closed until probably June.

This is obviously a very disruptive set of circumstances for people who would normally use those roads and bridges all the time. One of the major class 1 roadways has been damaged. That roadway was just raised in 2011 to deal with the flood in 2011. An ethanol plant was knocked offline. Electric substations have been damaged. Grains stored in bins from last year's harvest have been destroyed. Livestock have been lost. Many farmers will not be able to get crops in the ground this year because it will be too wet once the water goes down—until it is too late to successfully plant the crops. So thousands of acres and hundreds of farms just simply will not be able to do what they do because of the flood.

The scale and scope of these events has clearly overwhelmed local governments, overwhelmed county governments, and stretched the State government in a significant way. Most effectively, and most importantly, it has impacted families and individuals. If your home is underwater, if it takes 2 more hours to get to school, if you have no chance of planting your crop or if you are in a business that relates to the family who is going to plant the crop, if you have nobody buying the seed or paying the repairs for their equipment, paying for the gasoline—the things you do to stay in business—that has all kinds of impact as well.

The Governor of Missouri has requested a Presidential disaster declaration. I am certainly for that, and every

Member of the Missouri delegation signed the letter asking the President to grant that declaration. The assistance that would be impacted by this would be vital. It is important. We need that kind of assistance now.

I am going to continue to work—and I hope all our colleagues continue to work—to make this year's disasters and last fall's disasters eligible for the funds we appropriate for disaster coverage.

During the flood, a lot has been said about the Corps of Engineer's management of the Missouri River, and what, if anything, they could have done that might have prevented the flood this time. I think probably not. This is such an unusual flood that the locks on the Missouri were north of where the flood occurred. There was a dam that broke that would not normally have broken, and that would normally not even be part of the Missouri River management system.

The Corps has been out there trying to help figure out how to recover rather than figure out what caused this particular flood. In fact, the Corps and the permanent staff in places like the Kansas City office of the Corps understand the Missouri River better than anybody, in my view, and are helpful when they can be.

That doesn't mean the Corps, in a greater sense, isn't responsible for what has become the new normal on the Missouri River. We have had recurrent historic flooding on the river now for 15 years. Ever since the Corps asked for a new management plan in 2004 and got the new management plan, it just simply doesn't work.

At least 6 of the top 10 river crests in recorded history have occurred in the last 15 years. Floods in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011—you see the pattern here—2013, and 2019. The only reason we didn't have dramatic floods every year was we had a couple of drought years in 2009 and 2012.

This all goes back to that 2004 management plan. What changed in 2004? In 2004, the Corps started to implement the Missouri River Recovery Program in response to a Biological Opinion—"opinion" may be the key word here—Biological Opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which took the position that the existing management of the river was impacting one species of fish and two species of birds.

The ultimate result was prioritizing the management of the entire river to benefit that fish and those birds. It was above flood control. It was above navigation. It didn't consider what was detrimental to families, to farms, or the local infrastructure and was not necessary. Saving wildlife is a worthy goal, but for that goal to truly be worthy, it has to also include how it impacts families, how it impacts people, and how it impacts the economy.

We had management plans on the Mississippi River as well, but the wildlife management plans didn't become the plan that substituted for all other plans.

The Corps' management plan brought out changes to the lower river. There are six locks and there are six dams, rather, and reservoirs above the Lower Missouri that starts roughly in the place where Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri all come together. What happened was they began to destabilize the banks, constructing pallid sturgeon chutes that impacted how the water ran into the river. They no longer dredged the river like they had before. Just to understand why that matters, a 9-foot channel of the river carries a lot more water than a 6- or 7-foot channel of the river. If you are channeling the river so you can still navigate the river, they had interception rearing complexes, none of which appears to have made much of a difference, except they made it hard to control the river at flood stage.

Modifying or eliminating the river control systems eliminate the normal things in a river, such as revetments, wing dikes, and chevrons that control the river and send the water in the direction it needs to be for flood protection, and that just didn't happen.

Fish and Wildlife and the Corps of Engineers actually now know that some of the actions they were carrying out caused direct negative impacts on the river and didn't do any good. There is a high level of certainty that when you notch a dike in the river—which means you cut a hole in a structure that is designed to channel the water—that when you do that, bad things happen. That is why that structure was put there in the first place for a reason.

One of the most disappointing parts of what has happened is a relatively low level of certainty that any of these things do any good. In fact, the Corps and the Fish and Wildlife people have already abandoned the pursuit of what they constructed, pallid sturgeon chutes, which they thought would encourage the pallid sturgeon to multiply. By the way, this is a fish we happen to multiply ourselves at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery, which I believe is the oldest fish hatchery in the United States. The U.S. hatchery system is in Neosho. Pallid sturgeon is one of the things they do. They didn't work, but they did encourage more flood risk.

I would have one suggestion for the Corps: If you know an action will increase flood control and you know it will harm people and harm property and you don't know whether it will help save a species, don't do it. There has to be a way you figure out first whether this is going to work, and then you might evaluate if it is so important that we are going to impact people and property.

What we had is a big experiment that turned out to be the wrong thing to do to start with. It didn't serve the purpose, and it did harm the river and people who live on the river. Flood control and navigation needs to be, once again, elevated to the top two priorities of managing the river. I look forward to

working with my colleagues to figure out how to do this in a better way.

There is no question that the Mississippi River is about to be more important than it has been in 100 years. There is also no reason that the Missouri River, as an avenue of commerce and as an avenue that people can get near and enjoy from a tourist's and traveler's perspective, can't be there, and there is no reason it can't continue to be managed in a way that benefits families, that benefits us economically, and that doesn't repeat year after year after year the flooding that did not occur under the original management plan.

We need to look at that plan. We need to have a management plan that meets the commonsense standard. The current plan does not, and we have had now 15 years to prove that the current plan does not meet it. I am going to be working hard with both the Corps, the Department of the Interior, and Fish and Wildlife to see if we can't have a plan that meets that commonsense standard.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Missouri for his comments about the disaster. We are having a disaster in the U.S. Senate because we haven't been able to solve our emergency problem yet. It is not because of Senator BLUNT. He has done a great job, as have many Members of the Senate. We are close now, and there is a meeting this afternoon with important Senators. We are close on Hawaii, on Alaska, on Georgia, on South Carolina, on Tennessee, on Alabama, on Florida, and on the other States that have had disasters in the past year to which we have still been late on getting disaster emergency funds.

In fact, in Georgia, this is the 222nd day, in the case of one emergency, that those funds have been held up. In the agricultural season, 222 days is 1½ plants. It is one planting, one picking, and a second planting. So it is a significant part of the agriculture year. We are getting killed in Georgia. Our farmers are getting hurt badly because of the ineptitude, in part and sometimes in whole, of the U.S. Senate.

Finally, cool heads are coming together. We are getting over some arguments, and we are getting some things solved. Thanks to the help of Senator BLUNT and others in the U.S. Senate, we are going to get help to our farmers in Georgia, to those in Alabama, and to those in Alaska from the earthquake and to those in Hawaii from the lava flow and the eruptions they have had there and from all of the other disasters we have had. Finally, that money is going to start flowing.

REMEMBERING BETTY JO WILLIAMS

Mr. President, I lost two great friends in the last week—one of them a Georgian. Nobody in this room knew her. Her name was Betty Jo Williams, who was 90 years old.