

STATE OF MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon, Governor • Sara Parker Pauley, Director

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June 3, 2011

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Room 200 A
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

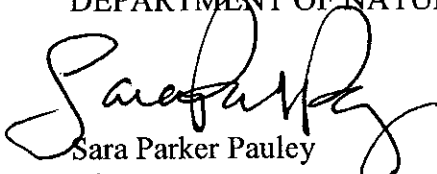
Sullivan County and the north central Missouri region often experience the most critical water supply shortages in the state. While many communities in the region have addressed their short-term water needs, these solutions are not sustainable through extended periods of drought, nor will they support long-term economic growth in the region. Therefore, I am writing to urge your continued support for the East Locust Creek Reservoir project, which is identified as the most feasible and cost effective solution to meet the region's water supply needs.

The citizens of Sullivan County have demonstrated their commitment to this project and should be commended for their leadership and initiative in forming the North Central Missouri Regional Water Commission. For nearly a decade the Commission has partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and has completed numerous plans and studies necessary to develop a regional drinking water reservoir. In addition, Sullivan County voters overwhelmingly passed a ½ cent sales tax in April 2010 and increased wholesale water rates in order to meet their matching requirements for land acquisition, relocation, engineering and project construction. Unfortunately, with recent federal budget cuts it is uncertain if the NRCS will provide future financial and technical support to continue this much needed project.

The East Locust Creek Reservoir is vitally important to the health and prosperity of the citizens in north central Missouri and it is critical that support from the NRCS and United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development be continued to help address this serious shortage of water resources.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES


Sara Parker Pauley
Director