

**From:** [Donna Kubik](#)  
**To:** [Kelli Buscher](#)  
**Subject:** Letter Regarding Medary Township Big Sioux River Diversion Channel  
**Date:** Sunday, December 14, 2025 1:29:49 PM  
**Attachments:** [Letter Regarding Medary Township Big Sioux River Diversion Channel- Rolfe and Donna Behrend.docx](#)

---

You don't often get email from donna\_kubik@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello Kelli,

Hope this finds you well. Attached is the document stating our opinions on the Medary Township Big Sioux River Diversion Channel-Dike Reestablishment Project.

Thank you,  
Rolfe and Donna Behrend

To Whom this may concern:

This is Rolfe and Donna Behrend. We live at 2502 w 44<sup>th</sup> St South, Brookings, SD

Sioux River Diversion Channel-Dike Reestablishment project. We would like to share our thoughts concerning this project and the letter that was sent to us about this project.

The letter states that “the diversion structure failed at some point prior to 2011” I can tell you that the structure gave way even before 2003 when I bought my land. I purchased the land in 2003 and that structure had already given way. So now, the structure in the proposal could possibly change the Big Sioux River after we built our home. I built our home in 2004, knowing that there would be some flooding. Our driveway floods 3-4 times a year, some years, not every year, but it has not washed out since 2008. We have a lot of concerns regarding the proposed action as stated in the letter.

Now that there is talk about that structure and plugging it up, we are concerned about how the course of the river is going to be altered. Will the actions of the “plug” cause the water to come right for our home or damage the driveway where we cannot even get to our home. Through the years I have taken hundreds of photos of the Big Sioux River by our home. I have 2 separate ariel photos-one set in 2012 and another in 2019. In the 2012 photos you can clearly see the river has changed courses in recent history. We are concerned about our home and our driveway and our land. “Since 2011, the hydrology of the Big Sioux River in the area has changed due to increased flows in the diversion ditch, flooding farmland and causing concerns for transportation infrastructure. “The structure was built before drain tiling in Brookings County. Drain tiling has to account for some of the increased flows in the diversion ditch. Will plugging that structure cause more damage somewhere else with water flow? The question I have, will it cause the river to change a course where my home, land, and driveway are affected? I don’t know what new course the river will find, but I know that it will find a new path. The water HAS got to go somewhere.

I understand the county road to the west of us gets water over the road 2-3 times a year, on some years-not every year. I know the county closes that road whenever there is water on the road-sometimes for an extended period of time. When there is water overflowing on that country road, we too have water on our driveway, all the water seems to “balance,” equal itself out. I question where all that water flow will go, once the “plug” is in place. In the July 7<sup>th</sup> 2025 Brookings Register the article “Big Sioux project gets ok” writes ““All of a sudden, now you’ve got---the last study we had, probably four years ago, showed you actually had more water at one time running down the bypass than you did the main Big Sioux River” I don’t know when that study was conducted but as I glance out the window every day at the Big Sioux River, I know for a fact that there is a lot of water flow on the main

Big Sioux River. In the same article, “Hill said his office checked with the Banner Associates engineer handling the proposal regarding a pair of nearby residences, and that there didn’t **appear** to be any danger to those residences.” We are those residences! We are worried because this is our home. In this case, would the county be helping us if the river changes courses to our home and our driveway? If the structure being built results in our driveway or our home being damaged, would there be financial compensation? I don’t believe anyone, (Banner Associates, Brookings County, the landowners south of the structure, or Rolfe and Donna Behrend) knows if the Big Sioux River will stay in the main channel or carve out a new channel. I am questioning the line in the article “there doesn’t **appear** to be any danger to those residences.” I hope it’s not just a guess and that our home and driveway will not be in danger.

These are our concerns. Thank you for your time. Please take our thoughts into consideration. If you would like to talk to us more, here is our information. Rolfe Behrend  
2502 W 44<sup>th</sup> St South, Brookings SD 605.690.7768