

**From:** [Kelli Buscher](#)  
**To:** "[Sean Lesnar](#)"  
**Cc:** [Kathy Lesnar](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Medary Township Big Sioux River Diversion Channel  
**Date:** Monday, December 15, 2025 2:54:00 PM

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Mr. and Mrs. Lesnar –

Thank you for your email. I want to acknowledge that I have received your comments and they will be both included and addressed in the EA. We are in the early stages of developing the EA and this request for comments was an important early step. I will be reviewing your comments along with the others I have received, and I will be discussing it with the County, NRCS, and the Corps of Engineers. I am not prepared to provide a response yet, but you are absolutely correct that you are owed a response and you will receive one. I believe a meeting with you would be an excellent idea and I appreciate the suggestion.

I will be in touch further, but please feel free to reach out to me with any questions. Thank you again for your comments.

**Kelli D. Buscher, P.E.** | Project Manager

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**From:** Sean Lesnar <[lesnar12@gmail.com](mailto:lesnar12@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 14, 2025 4:10 PM  
**To:** Kelli Buscher <[kellib@bannerassociates.com](mailto:kellib@bannerassociates.com)>  
**Cc:** Sean Lesnar <[lesnar12@gmail.com](mailto:lesnar12@gmail.com)>; Kathy Lesnar <[khlesnar@gmail.com](mailto:khlesnar@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Medary Township Big Sioux River Diversion Channel

You don't often get email from [lesnar12@gmail.com](mailto:lesnar12@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Kelly,

I received the letter regarding the Big Sioux Diversion in Medary Township.

My name is Sean Lesnar and myself and family live at 1716 West 44<sup>th</sup> St. In Brookings, SD 57006. My house and farmland are directly downstream from this proposed Dike Reestablishment Project. I have lived in our house since 2006 and have owned land around it since about 2003.

I am formally OPPOSED to this "Dike reestablishment"

I am a DIRECTLY AFFECTED LANDOWNER, I believe that should put me at the top tier of commenters - far above the "general public" input.

Comments/Questions:

1. I am a DIRECTLY affected landowner and NO ONE has ever contacted me or came and visited with me about the impact this may have on my Home property or adjoining land. I have spoke to several neighbor landowner and they have referenced there have been some meetings recently and I am wondering why myself and my neighbor Rolfe Behrend have not been invited specifically since our homes will be the most directly affected.
2. What are the specific reasons for this proposal? Who will it benefit? Or who is wanting this done and pushing for this specifically? The only 2 reasons I see in the letter are: "Flooding farmland" and "a concern for transportation infrastructure".
3. Whose flooding farmland specifically? Because there is no doubt that this will cause more flooding on my farmland and possibly affect my Home, and/or will certainly affect other neighbors. I will not be naming names now, but I have been told there are up to 20 landowners south of me that are pushing for this. Who, and again why have the 2 most affected landowners been kept out of the loop. I have personally visited, personel, at the Brookings County more than once, and have asked to be kept in the loop, and he said, "We would be kept up on everything". I have also spoken to landowners very close that I know that will be affected, and they have not been receiving notification about meetings and other dealings.
4. And if this does cause more flooding and damage, is Brookings County going to pay for the damages? And will they fix the next "break from the river" or "change of course"? This wasn't the first break from channel and will not be the last.
5. There was some type of "study" a few years ago. Some Surveyors asked to access my land. I "heard" it was around a \$40,000 study, and I was never contacted about the results. Did this study include what impact on adjoining property? I did go to the Brookings county building and asked about this and it "seemed" to always be pushed aside as "it was a long way off and likely not to happen".
6. I was at a meeting several years ago at a farmer's house south of me, (think it was Hexam's) and several gov't type people were there. NRCS people, Big Sioux river people, hydrologists, and others, etc. At the start of the meeting, we were told that

it was estimated that close to 60% of the Big Sioux River was flowing thru this new channel. I remember at the conclusion of meeting it was very unlikely to happen because of the cost, who would fund it? Because it was inside an easement area, and they don't usually give that kind of permission. Also, I specifically remember an "official" talking about how often and likely the Big Sioux river changes course naturally all the time anyway. I have witnessed this in over 20 years of owning property around it, and you can easily pull up an aerial map and see all the old "oxbow" or previous river paths. I have also talked in the past to "older landowners", people who have lived on the river for many many years and we talked about how the river changes its course all the time.

7. I bought and have lived on my property AFTER, the proposed Diversion channel "broke" years ago. This broke prior to my family living and purchasing our property and we are aware of what we are up against living on a river system but fixing this diversion channel now changes all this. The letter references this happening "at some point prior to 2011". Well, if for sure happened prior to 2003, because at that point the channel was really full and was obviously a deep channel at that time.
8. Again, I have been told that more than 60% of the Big Sioux River flows out of the river into this channel. How will NOT impact other areas and cause other concerns?
9. Regarding concerns for transportation infrastructure noted.....What concerns specifically? I would assume Brookings County's concern is the Bridge and adjoining area this channel currently uses?? Is this correct, or are there other concerns?
10. Again, using the 60% (or whatever % it really is) of flow in channel being diverted back to the Big Sioux River main channel, how will the Brand-new bridge and adjoining areas handle this extra flow? Does Brookings county believe there will be no more pressure on that new bridge area? Were the people or groups that planned the new Bridge west of my driveway notified about this possible increase in water flow? If not, are they liable for issues from this? And if so, they had more insight and knowledge about this project than us directly affected? Makes we wonder if I should contact them to find out.
11. Does Brookings County believe that by fixing this problem it will fix all problems? Do they believe that this won' create more problems? Are they prepared to address and pay for the Newly created problems?
12. This letter sent to me addresses a "previously installed diversion structure". I was

told by the current landowner that there was NO previously installed diversion structure. It was possibly that "someone" dug a small channel to let some water out for livestock? Is this true? Why are we labeling it a "previously installed diversion structure" if so. Is this even true, or was it a natural feeder channel or break in main channel, the same type that happens every year? Also, I know of other possible channels that should be repaired then. Will Brookings county pay for these to be repaired?

13. Does the study conducted earlier address the effect of "Drain tile" to the Big Sioux River? There is a correlation to "Drain tile" and the "Altered Water flow (Hydrology)". How has this affected the flow of the Big Sioux River. No question it has increased its flow. There is no doubt that the permits granted and increased water flow into the Big Sioux river from Drain tile permits. A quick search on the internet says there were some studies and concerns by SDSU and Brookings county regarding this. Again, my point is that the Big Sioux River changes all the time on its own and especially with the increased flow from Drain Tile. This channel was very full in 2003. It was not a "installed diversion structure" as stated. Maybe "someone dug a hole" or maybe natural. But that river changes all the time and plugging this WILL NOT stop it from happening again there or elsewhere.
14. Also, this letter states that this will be funded by Brookings County?? So it has been voted and approved? When? Why wasn't I contacted. Again, employees of Brookings County said to me personally they would keep me in the loop.
15. Has this study been sent to NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)?? I would like to see the findings from them. I would like to know if you have studied or analyzed my "property value" impacts, loss of use to increased flooding, soil erosion and bank instability, ag impacts, and cumulative impacts.
16. How will peak flood elevations change on my parcel?
17. What modeling was used and what assumptions were made?
18. How will erosion and sediment deposition be mitigated?
19. Who is financially responsible for future failures?
20. What alternatives were considered that avoids this?
21. Why is public funding being used for impacts to private property?

I believe I am owed an answer to all the above questions. I want my concerns addressed and not just acknowledged.

I want confirmation that these comments and questions are in the EA record.

As an affected landowner, I am requesting an on-site meeting prior to completion of the EA to review impacts to my property.

Please let me know when I can expect some answers and when I can expect a site visit.

I will also be sending a copy of this via certified mail.

Please confirm receipt of this email.

Thanks

Sean Lesnar  
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Brookings, SD 57006  
605-690-6425