

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1983

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SOUTHEAST KANSAS WATER WAR:

DOLE RECEIVES RESPONSE TO ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' LETTER

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole announced today that he has received a response from the Army Corps of Engineers to a series of questions he had posed regarding the so-called south-east Kansas "water war."

"The Corps' response outlines the facts and rationale which culminated in their decision to threaten four southeast Kansas communities with a water cutoff. The letter also indicates that the Corps acted with the explicit approval of the Kansas Water Office and Water Authority," Dole said.

"I am providing the mayors of the affected communities with copies of the letter for their review. We will follow up on their suggestions. Although the letter answers many of our questions, it seems to me that the Corps dodged certain questions -- such as how similar situated towns are treated -- and I intend to make further inquiry along those lines."

"The Corps has also advised me that they are seeking review of their position by higher authority within the Corps of Engineers. Based on their comments at the meeting in Washington last week and this request, it would appear that the Corps is much less certain of their legal basis," Dole said.

On August 24, 1983, the Tulsa District of the Corps of Engineers advised city officials from Altoona, Cherryvale, Fredonia and Neodesha that the Corps would cut off water from Fall River and Toronto Lakes within two weeks unless the cities agreed to sign a water purchase contract. The water cutoff deadline was subsequently postponed until January 1, 1985, to provide adequate time to resolve the question of whether the cities were required to sign a water contract.

On September 14, 1983, Senator Dole sent a letter to the Corps requesting answers to specific questions designed to alleviate the uncertainty surrounding this matter.