



MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Kevin Engler Calls on the A.G. to Stop Playing Politics – Drop the Lawsuit

JEFFERSON CITY — With students from the Lesterville school district observing the proceedings, Sen. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, today spoke on the Senate floor about the importance of rebuilding the Taum Sauk reservoir, a project being stalled by the lawsuit filed by the attorney general against Ameren UE. The lawsuit has raised concerns about further financial hardships in Reynolds and Iron counties and threatens the existence of the Lesterville school district.

On Dec. 14, 2005, the Taum Sauk dam failed, causing flooding throughout Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park and the surrounding areas. Ameren has taken responsibility for the collapse, made efforts to settle all issues related to the breach and announced plans to rebuild the plant after the legal issues are settled. The federal case was settled six months ago, but the state case remains in stuck in a quagmire. Engler criticized the governor, attorney general, and Department of Natural Resources for holding up the process for political reasons.

"The governor has publicly stated he wants to reach a settlement with Ameren that will allow the rebuild to begin as quickly as possible, but the attorney general has refused to drop the lawsuit," said Sen. Engler. "The attorney general's reasoning for refusing to do so, which include concerns over Ameren's ability to pay and decision as whether to rebuild, border on the ridiculous. In addition, I have been informed by other elected democrats that the attorney general asked the highway patrol to delay release of their investigative report on the failure to further delay any action."

The Lesterville school district is facing an unsure financial future if they no longer receive the revenue from property taxes paid by the plant, which accounts for over 50 percent of their operating funds. Ameren agreed to pay property taxes as if the plant was fully functioning until the end of this year.

"These kids don't know if they are going to have a school this time next year. That's ridiculous and unacceptable," said Engler. "I'm calling on the attorney general to put politics aside and do the right thing by dropping this lawsuit, so a settlement can be reached and the rebuild can begin on the reservoir, allowing the people in Reynolds and Iron counties can move forward."

Video excerpts of Sen. Engler's comments from the Senate floor are available on his website at www.senate.mo.gov/07info/members/mem03.htm.