Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 7, 2012

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Secretary Darcy:

We are writing to thank you and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for your continued assistance in expediting the process for achieving a permanent solution to Blanchard River flooding.

Stakeholders in Findlay and Ottawa tell us they have seen a noticeable difference in the project's progress since it was included in the USACE's new "3x3x3" pilot demonstration program. As you know, the 3x3x3 program was developed to reduce the time it takes for the USACE to complete project reports, cut costs and reduce the number of reviews to just those that are necessary for the decision making process. Given the relatively narrow set of potential options for the Blanchard River, and the urgency with which construction needs to get underway, the new process seems especially appropriate. We are hopeful that the project's inclusion in the demonstration program will result in an expedited timeline for completion of the Chief's Report. Ideally, the Chief's Report will be completed in 2013 so as to improve the chances of authorizing project construction in reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act.

According to USACE – Buffalo District, completion of the Chief's Report will require an additional $1.7 million in federal funding. We ask that you include the necessary funding for this project in your budget process. The local share for this element of the project is available.

As part of the effort to expedite completion of the overall project, the local sponsor and the USACE – Buffalo District have identified several small component projects certain to be included in the final plan, such as modifications to the I-9 bridge in Ottawa, that the local sponsor could begin immediately. We understand that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with USACE is the mechanism through which local sponsors are able to ensure credit for such work. We would ask that the USACE – Buffalo District work with the BRFRP Coalition on the MOU at the appropriate time to advance these important component projects with the goal of expediting the overall project.

We applaud the USACE and the local communities for working so closely on this critical project. This partnership continues to be a model for other communities to follow and one we are proud to support.

Again, we greatly appreciate your assistance and leadership with respect to advancing the BRFRP. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Rob Portman
United States Senator

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

Jim Jordan
Member of Congress