DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT and NATURAL RESOURCES

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DENR Holding Informational Meeting on Big Sioux River Flood Modeling

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will hold an informational meeting on March 22 in North Sioux City. DENR staff will discuss a new hydrologic and hydraulic model to be developed for the Big Sioux River basin and seek public input.

The meeting will be held from 3-6 p.m. at City Hall, 504 River Drive, in North Sioux City. It is open to local governmental officials and the public. Informational displays about the proposed modeling project will be available for viewing. DENR staff will present an overview of the proposal at 4:00 p.m. and will be available throughout the meeting time to answer questions.

"Local, state and federal officials recognize the need for new hydrologic modeling to more accurately portray the complex hydrology of the Big Sioux River and better respond to flood events," said DENR Secretary Steve Pirner. "Large amounts of time, materials and financial resources were consumed trying to protect homes, businesses and infrastructure during flood events in both 2011 and 2014."

The 2016 South Dakota Legislature appropriated $750,000 from the Water and Environment Fund, which receives dedicated funding from online lottery and tank inspection fees, for DENR to use in contracting for the new model. The modeling project was recommended in Gov. Daugaard's Omnibus Water Funding Bill – SB 68 – by Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, who led the flood fights in the lower Big Sioux area in both 2011 and 2014, and the Board of Water and Natural Resources through the State Water Planning Process.

DENR is providing information to area officials and the general public prior to advertising for a qualified engineering and hydrologic consulting firm through a Request for Proposal process to develop the model.

Data generated from the model will allow more accurate predictions of river stages during a flood event. The model will also consider such things as how natural landscape changes impact flows during a flood event and how variable flows in the Missouri River impact flood events in the lower Big Sioux River basin.

The project will produce a user-friendly website that authorities can use to more accurately predict areas that will be inundated during a flood. The data, model and website generated from this study will predict impacted areas for a range of flood scenarios.

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