

competitiveness of the automotive industry, Mexico started a program to gradually increase, from 2006 to 2009, the **supply of low sulphur fuels** in all the country.

- To improve the **ecological health of our shared marine resources**, our governments continued to expand the North American Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Network. The Network will use our countries' marine protected areas in the development of a tri-national MPA-based monitoring program stretching from Baja to the Bering Strait.
- To **assure the safety of consumers and the security of our food and agriculture systems**, Canada, Mexico and the United States agreed to share

current threat and vulnerability assessment methodology and information for the food and agriculture systems, including imported and exported foods of higher concern, then undertake joint threat and vulnerability assessments.

- To better inform our citizens and civil society and receive input on our collaborative efforts under the SPP framework, the governments of Mexico and Canada **hosted seminars with academics and specialists** on the three countries as part of an ongoing public policy consultation process regarding the future of North America.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Remarks Following a Briefing on the Interstate 35W Bridge Damage and Minnesota Floods in Minneapolis, Minnesota *August 21, 2007*

I want to thank the Senators, the Congresspersons, the Governor, and the mayor for joining me and Secretary Peters and others in my administration. We're here to talk about two disasters. First, we talked about the bridge that collapsed. I was here earlier, saw the collapse firsthand. I was impressed by the magnitude of the problem. It was—my heart was touched by the fact that people lost their lives.

Coming back here, I'm impressed by the spirit of cooperation that is taking place to solve the problem. The Federal Government, the State government, and the local government have worked very closely, on the one hand, to rescue the remains in a compassionate way. I appreciate our military divers who are so skilled, skilled at not only finding the bodies but skilled at helping a loved one deal with grief.

The question now is, how fast can we get the bridge built? Members of the Minnesota senatorial and congressional delegation did really good work at the end of the session, passed authorization for a significant chunk of money that would go to get this bridge up and running.

And so our job now is to cut through the bureaucracy, as best as possible, and get the people down here a new bridge. And that's what we've been discussing. The recovery is not complete, but pretty close to complete. The investigation as to why is ongoing. What the people of Minneapolis want to know is how fast can we get them a new bridge, and can it be modern, and can it accommodate future forms of transportation? I believe the answer to that question is yes. The spirit that caused the recovery to be well-coordinated is the very

same spirit that's going to cause this bridge to get rebuilt.

The Governor and others have briefed me on the floods in Congressman Walz's district.

These floods come suddenly. People wake up and find their lives turned upside down. Water comes charging through their communities and really kind of wrecks the infrastructure. But what I have found, and the Congressmen and Senators have found the same thing, you can't wreck the spirit of people.

The job of the Federal Government is to get help moving as quickly as possible. I just talked to the Governor, who has processed the final and the necessary paperwork so that a flood of help can come down, Tim, to get these people realizing somebody cares about them.

I understand rural America pretty well. Sometimes people in rural America wonder whether or not the people in the cities think about them. I appreciate you coming to brief us, because I want those folks to understand, the President thinks about it; the Senators and the Governor have heard

about it, and they care about it. There's help that's available. We'd love to get the small businesses up and running, maybe help to get some shelter down there for people. I'm looking forward to making sure that the right people show up here on the ground. Secretary Peters has been the right person to coordinate this effort for the bridge, and we'll get somebody down here in charge to give your people in your district some hope.

There's no doubt in my mind that when I come back to see the bridge open that these communities will be up and running too, and that State football championship team you were talking about—[laughter]—will be winning games again.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:53 p.m. in the Base Operations—Blue Room at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Air Reserve Station. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Timothy J. Pawlenty of Minnesota; and Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN. He also referred to Public Law 110–56, approved August 6.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Community Leaders in Riverside, Missouri *August 22, 2007*

How is everybody doing? Thank you for joining me. I'm visiting with some of the area's finest citizens. We talked about businesses and opportunities and sports and culture. It's good to be with you. Thank you. I hope you leave here with the sense that I'm upbeat about the future of this

country. I believe strongly we can do anything we put our minds to do.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. at the Corner Cafe.