



August 12, 2016

Dear Major General Wehr, Members of the Mississippi River Commission, and the St. Louis District:

My name is Aimee Andres, Executive Director of the Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals Association. IRPT is a nationwide trade association for ports and terminals to promote the use of our nation's rivers as the most cost effective, and environmentally-friendly form of transportation.

My goals include:

- the promotion of regional collaboration,
- marketing the inland waterways,
- encouraging cooperation and
- education of lawmakers and the general public.

I appreciate and understand the focus of this meeting being attentive to the Mississippi, but a few of points should be made:

1. Although it is the Mighty Mississippi, it is not a stand-alone natural resource, but rather one part of a national transportation system. Commodities shipped via the Mississippi are not always generated, nor do they end on the Mississippi.
2. A BIG factor that affects the Mississippi River are the tributaries entering and distributaries below.

For example,

- i. water flow is supplied in part by the many tributary flows into the Mississippi and;
- ii. the Old River Structure at Vidalia diverts 30 % of the flow of the Mississippi into the Atchafalaya Basin- which was designed so the Mississippi would stay on its current course.

The River is responsible for creating \$400 billion worth of U.S. GDP; transporting 40 percent of our nation's agricultural output; and directly supporting 1.3 million jobs and millions more indirectly (economic figures come from two economic profiles. One is available from the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee and the other from Upper Mississippi River Basin Association/UMRBA.)

The land in the Mississippi River Basin produces 92 percent of the nation's agricultural exports and 78 percent of the world's exports of feed grains and soybeans. Mississippi River ports supply transportation for the 75 million acres of soybean, 63 million acres of wheat and 90 million acres of corn – all produced in the heartland of the United States with major growing states being Iowa and Illinois.

long-term contract but cost a higher amount than if the project were fully funded with dedicated resources.

We applaud the performance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fully. Metaphorically, you are trying to do 100% of the work with only 5% of funding. And while we continue to support and applaud the Corps on their performance of maintenance, repairs and dredging; a more holistic long-term approach should be explored, not only to save general taxpayer dollars on continuous dredging, but to ensure the longevity of the river transportation system so that capital investments can be made to public port properties, private terminal infrastructure, and so market development and new business activities can be performed.

We ask of Congress and the Corps:

1. For a more predictable funding stream to operate and maintain locks and dams of our river system;
2. For a more predictable funding stream for maintenance pertaining to channel dredging for commercial navigation.
3. To explore a more long-term holistic approach at operating and maintaining our inland rivers for commercial navigation.

I thank you for allowing me to speak. I commend you on your strong leadership and support for national transportation issues. I greatly appreciate any proactive measures that could ensure the support of this critical area of our national freight system. On behalf of all of our members nationwide, I want to thank you for considering our request.

Aimee Andres
Executive Director