

Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association

9049 Corporate Gardens Drive, Suite 101, Germantown, TN 38138

mvfca@att.net

(901) 758-1616

DEDICATED TO FLOOD CONTROL • BANK STABILIZATION • DRAINAGE • NAVIGATION

Executive Committee

August 19, 2016

Missouri

Sam Hunter, Chair
Sikeston, MO

Alan Lomax wrote, *"The levee is higher and longer than the Great Wall of China, very likely the biggest thing that man has ever made. It was the principal human response to the titanic power of the great river."*

Illinois

Russell Koeller
New Canton, IL

It is a great privilege to offer written testimony to the Mississippi River Commission, thank you. I represent the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association concerning the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. We continue to travel to Washington, D.C., along with many other members from up and down the river, presenting the case to our legislators for a minimum of \$500 million dollars in appropriations every year and \$2 billion as a strategic investment to bolster the levees after the Christmas and early 2016 floods, to improve and help protect our economic engine in the heart of the country (see the attached MVFCA Resolution and the ~38 resolutions on the drop box link from people representing 17 million acres of ground and 10 states). We appreciate that the MR&T continues to be a line item in the budget. As much money as this is, in hard times, we remind you that the investment in the MR&T system in preparation for the 2011 flood resulted in more than \$246 billion worth of damages prevented by the MR&T system. A return on federal dollar investment of 46 to 1. We cannot afford to stop or slow down the continuity of this high value; high return and much need national investment. It is an investment not an expense. The MR&T project affords billions of dollars in savings in transportation rates each year (your MRC 2016 Report indicates \$5.6 billion annually; and 670 million tons of cargo moved on the Miss River system). This is of great value to the entire nation not just the people of the valley. We thank the congress for their leadership, support and past funding.

Kentucky

Greg Curlin
Fulton, KY

Tennessee

Jimmy Moody
Dyersburg, TN

Arkansas

Harry Stephens
Helena, AR

Steve Higginbothom
Marianna, AR

Mississippi

Willie Gregory
Clarksdale, MS

Our board member from Helena, Arkansas, Mr. Harry Stephens great uncle James Millander Hanks, wrote in his diaries from 1864-1909 and told about traveling to Washington in 1866 to talk to then President Johnson about the levee. He was the first Representative from the 1st District in Arkansas, the job now held by Representative Rick Crawford, the President of the MVFCA. I don't know how much levee was there then but each of us should be proud to be a part of a partnership that began with private individuals, local and state governments and finally the federal investments. There is no other system that has been or continues to be of such benefit to our country. *The federal government would be wise to openly discuss this MR&T project as an example of how federal partnerships and investments WORK to help people and our nation's economic success.*

Fred Ballard
Leland, MS

Louisiana

Reynold Minsky
Lake Providence, LA

Dwayne Bourgeois
Raceland, LA

Stephen Gambrell
Executive Vice President

State Vice Presidents: John Stringer (LA) David Human (IL) Doug Voorhees (KY) Randy Richardson (TN)
David Gillison Jr (AR) Robert Sayle (MS) AC Riley James (MO)

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The MR&T project is a wise investment for this country and it is good for our economy. It will be a vital link to the defense of our country in the event of an attack by our enemies. This project must be targeted for swift completion and proper maintenance. Local interests have done and continue to do their part. We need the federal government to fulfill its obligation and “infrastructure investment” and bring the MR&T project in line with the needs of our nation for today and tomorrow.

A few years ago FEMA tried to initiate action that would require us to buy insurance on all real property improvements in their flood zone on the protected side of the levee. They gave the levee no credit even after proving itself in the record 2011 flood. The MR&T project performed as designed. Through a lot of work and wisdom our legislators stopped this tax. Now we have the National Levee Safety Committee which are imposing unachievable standards on our levees. On January 30, 2015 we received Executive Order 13690. This amends federal flood risk management standards, coming from a group working behind closed doors ... we say this because we participated in sessions and commented ... to no avail! They would raise the vertical elevation on our levees as much as 3 feet. On August 1, 2016 the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), released its “Final Guidance on Considering Climate Change in Environmental Reviews”. This Guidance increases the time and cost for NEPA compliance required under Clean Water Act (CWA) permits. When NEPA is triggered by a Corps of Engineers’ Section 408 (a “Federal action” to which NEPA always applies) for a levee or flood protection project this guidance will expand the “scope of analysis” to the entire project, and even beyond the project limits or “rights of way”.

The EPA and the Clean Water Act “Rules Clarification” are so vague they could be regulating all water from the pothole in the road to your bath water and all between. We cannot let the federal bureaucracies negate the efforts that have provided the best flood control and navigation system in the world. It remains envied by all countries that are in need of improving reliable productive living for their people.

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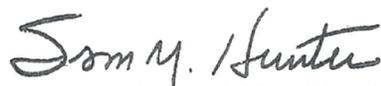
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Commission, thank you for your help in the resulting \$100's of billions of dollars in damages that did not occur during floods because you supported the investment of funds and other resources in the greatest civil works project on the planet, the MR&T. It is becoming known in other countries as the "Eighth Wonder of the World". Mark Twain once said, "Ten thousand river commissions...cannot tame that lawless stream... cannot say to it, go here or go there and make it obey". He did not have the privilege of seeing the MR&T project at work.

We ask that you lead in the re-investment in flood control and navigation. Our people will discover a way to invest ... so that families and their ability to be productive in the delivery of Food, Fiber, and wise use of water will continue to result in the provision of food at an affordable price. Our national security depends on this stable life providing approach.

We are very appreciative for your regularly and systematically listening to the local people and for your leadership in the protection of people and our nation's economy.

Gratefully,



Sam M. Hunter, DVM

Chairman

Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association

Drop box link to Resolutions:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fjwf51ylgljze0c/AADF4j_6bx27xE3vwGtKWHyxa?dl=0

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Resolution

Whereas, the unrelenting Christmas storm systems that caused the greatest flooding on record in the Middle Mississippi River Basin and near record flooding in the Lower Mississippi River Basin; and

Whereas, the value of the agricultural products and the large agribusiness industry in the Mississippi River Basin produces ninety-two (92) percent of the nation's agricultural exports, seventy-eight (78) percent of the world's exports in feed grains and soybeans, and most of the livestock and hogs produced nationally; and

Whereas, sixty (60) percent of all grain exported from the United States is shipped via the Mississippi River from ports throughout the region, down to the Port of New Orleans and the Port of South Louisiana; and

Whereas, navigation on the Mississippi River carries the vast amount of vital products: coal, fertilizer, cement, gravel and salt, among others, which are the building blocks of our nation's economy; and

Whereas, the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project, the nation's most successful comprehensive flood control and navigation project provides protection for more than four million people that live in the Lower Mississippi Valley, impacts people in half the USA and since its creation in 1928, has saved thousands of lives, communities, and more than half a trillion dollars in property damage and loss; and

Whereas, the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project is one of the most successful civil works projects and the wisest public works investment our country has made, protecting more than \$250 billion dollars in assets; and

Whereas, beyond its flood control protection, the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project provides benefits crucial to the Mississippi Valley region, including stable drinking water supplies, power generation, navigation and commerce, economic development and recreation; and

Stephen Gambrell
Executive Vice President

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David Gillison Jr (AR) Robert Sayle (MS)

Doug Voorhees (KY)
AC Riley James (MO)

Randy Richardson (TN)
John Stringer (LA)

Whereas, as a result of the historic floods of 2008, 2011, and 2015-2016, the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project has been compromised; and

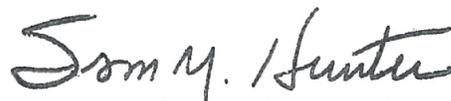
Whereas, failing to complete and recover the comprehensive flood control project, experiencing a failure in the system or failing to restore the system in time for the next high-water event would be devastating to our nation's economy and quality of life; and

Whereas, the United States Congress has the authority to prioritize and supply funding to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal and state agencies so that those devastated by flooding can reliably produce, rebuild and restore their lives and livelihood; to approve and fund a comprehensive flood control and navigation project for the upper Mississippi River Basin to protect people and property; to pass legislation providing the authority to streamline the burdensome regulatory process to ensure federal funds are used for the primary objective of high value projects, not permits and studies.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that The Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association supports the passage of supplemental appropriations in the amount of 2 billion dollars to repair flood damage to the system and infrastructure; yearly funding in the amount of 500 million dollars per year for continued maintenance of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project; the passage of comprehensive flood control for the upper Mississippi River Basin to provide economic reliability and to protect people and property throughout the entire Mississippi River Valley; and

Be it further resolved, that The Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association supports passage of federal legislation providing local levee and drainage districts in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Mississippi River Commission the authority to streamline the burdensome regulatory and environmental processes to ensure federal dollars are spent on projects to protect people and property.

Done this 2nd day of February, 2016 by vote of the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association Executive Committee.



Sam M. Hunter
Chairman
Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association