



MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI

August 22, 2014

Statement of the Mississippi River Commission *Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) Project*

MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 80
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39181-0080

PRESIDENT and MEMBER

*Brig. Gen. Peter A. "Duke" DeLuca
*Commander, Mississippi
Valley Division*
Vicksburg, Mississippi

MEMBERS

Honorable Sam E. Angel
Sr. Civilian
Lake Village, Arkansas

*Honorable R. D. James
Civilian/Civil Engineer
New Madrid, Missouri

Honorable Norma Jean Mattei
Civilian/Civil Engineer
Metairie, Louisiana

Brig. Gen. Margaret W. Burcham
*Commander, Great Lakes &
Ohio River Division*
Cincinnati, Ohio

RDML Gerd F. Glang
*National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration*
Silver Spring, Maryland

Brig. Gen. John S. Kem
*Commander, Northwestern
Division*
Portland, Oregon

SECRETARY

Lieut. Col. Torrey A. DiCiro
Vicksburg, Mississippi

DIRECTOR / Civil Engineer

Mr. T. Stephen Gambrell
Vicksburg, Mississippi
(601) 634-5766

Email: cemvd-ex@usace.army.mil
www.mvd.usace.army.mil/mrc

*nominee

The MR&T project is unquestionably one of nation's wisest investments, having a 45 to 1 rate of return for each dollar spent to protect lives, homes, businesses, commerce, important ecosystems, and critical public infrastructure. During the unprecedented 2011 record flood, the MR&T project prevented \$234 billion dollars or one-quarter of a trillion dollars in flood damages to the nation's economy. Key agricultural centers, energy producers, manufacturers, and more than 4 million people escaped the ravages of the flood and, together, they continue to serve as pistons in the economic engine of the nation.

The MR&T system, however, remains incomplete and incapable of passing the project design flood that the system is intended to convey. The Mississippi River Commission estimates that, under current and projected funding levels that fall short of the \$500 million annual capacity of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the lower valley, the MR&T project will not be complete until the 2060's. With consideration given to normal operations and maintenance costs and necessary repairs from future flood events, the Mississippi River Commission is not convinced that the MR&T project can ever be completed because of the repetitious maintenance backlog cycle. That vicious cycle, in turn, slows or retards the benefits that the MR&T system provides and puts the nation at risk of devastating floods. The floods will result in system failure impacting productive commercial communities and navigation and will damage our economic leadership and national security.

The Mississippi River Commission further estimates an investment requirement of \$15 billion is needed to re-capitalize aging features of the MR&T project. These features include the gated concrete spillways governing the floodways, dams that provide critical storage for floods in the project reservoirs, the Old River Control Structure, and various pumping stations and drainage control structures over the next several decades.

The need for investment in the system is strengthened by an understanding that flood control, and commerce share a symbiotic relationship with the critically important ecosystems and ecosystem services on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Without viable flood protection, the majestic river that connects the nation's breadbasket, rice bowl, and energy production centers to the rest of the world would not exist as a great commercial artery. As agricultural yields produce record harvests capable of feeding the world and as nearby hydrocarbon production centers entice more manufacturing jobs to the nation, the economic expansion of this country will depend on a strong generational investment to provide protection to address increasing flooding brought about by accelerating changes in the climate.

Since 1879, the seven-member Presidentially appointed Mississippi River Commission has developed and matured plans for the general improvement of the Mississippi River from the Head of Passes to the Headwaters. The Mississippi River Commission brings critical engineering representation to the drainage basin, which impacts 41% of the United States and includes 1.25 million square miles, over 250 tributaries, 31 states, and 2 Canadian provinces.

Listening, Inspecting, Partnering and Engineering since 1879