

Dear Mr. Butler:

Thank you for your statement before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, on April 6, 2001, in which you presented comments on areas of concern to the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association.

We share your viewpoint on the importance of our nation's maritime transportation system. Inland navigation continues to be a critical part of our nation's infrastructure and confers wide-ranging benefits on national and state economies. Currently the New Orleans District operates and maintains nine primary navigation locks on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and the Morgan City to Port Allen, Louisiana, alternate route. Of the nine locks, Leland Bowman Lock was replaced in 1985, Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock is under construction for replacement, Bayou Sorrel Lock is being evaluated for modification or replacement, and Calcasieu Lock is in the feasibility study phase for replacement. The New Orleans District is committed to meeting the growing demand of the maritime transportation system and will continue to assess problematic areas as they develop.

You also discussed an initiative to close the lower 110 miles of the GIWW in Texas. That segment of the waterway lies outside the area overseen by the Mississippi River Commission and Mississippi Valley Division. I recommend that you contact the Southwestern Division Engineer in Dallas, Texas, Brigadier General David F. Melcher, for further information on this matter.

The Commission congratulates you on your appointment to succeed Mr. Doug Svendson as the Executive Director of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association. We look forward to working with you and the Association. We appreciate receiving your views and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
President Designee, Mississippi  
River Commission