

Dear Mr. Chauvin:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Houma, Louisiana, on August 23, 2002. In your statement you discussed the Morganza to the Gulf project and, particularly, the Houma Navigation Canal Lock feature.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is evaluating the feasibility of deepening the Houma Navigation Canal to a 20-foot nominal depth. Preliminary calculations indicate that the deepening is economically justified. You will be provided an opportunity to review and comment on the recommended plan before it is finalized and forwarded to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters next year for approval.

As you are aware from your meeting with New Orleans District personnel on September 5, 2002, alternatives are being considered by the lock and floodgate designers to provide a 250-foot horizontal clearance floodgate to accommodate wider vessels. Since the floodgate will accommodate vessels needing 200-foot clearance, the plan selection process for an adjacent, smaller lock will consider 75-foot and 110-foot widths.

We appreciate your support of this much needed hurricane protection project and assure you that we are proceeding with pre-construction engineering and design efforts as rapidly as possible. Construction of the Houma Navigation Canal Lock is scheduled to commence in June 2004 and on the levees in the more populated reaches of the project in June 2005. These schedules

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are subject to Congressional authorization, appropriation of funds for construction, and the execution of a Project Cooperation Agreement. Your continued support of this much needed hurricane protection project is vital as we proceed to the construction phase.

The Commission appreciates receiving your views and looks forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley

Brigadier General, U.S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission