

Dear Mr. Daigle:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Morgan City, Louisiana, on August 23, 2001. In your statement you discussed the issue of "hypoxia" and record size of the "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Corps of Engineers acknowledges your concerns of the hypoxic conditions in the northern Gulf of Mexico. The Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, in its press release of July 26, 2001, noted your observation about the largest hypoxic zone to date. The Action Plan report for reducing, mitigating, and controlling hypoxia was presented to Congress by the Environmental Protection Agency in January 2001. This plan calls for the Corps to carry out a reconnaissance-level study of potential nutrient reduction actions that could be achieved by modifying Corps projects or project operations. Congressional authorization and funding are necessary to enable the Corps to accomplish the study. Nevertheless, the Corps is increasingly taking the hypoxia problem into account as it makes plans for future work throughout the Mississippi and Atchafalaya River basins and in the central Gulf Coast region.

As you know, the Corps is participating in most if not all Mississippi River Basin Alliance regional sessions. For your information, I will personally attend and be on the panel at the St. Louis meeting on October 20.

Thank you again for your comments to the Commission. 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