

Dear Mr. Edwards:

Thank you for your statement before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in West Memphis, Arkansas, on August 20, 2002. In your statement you discussed the need for the Grand Prairie Region project.

The Commission recognizes the importance of clean and abundant water. As you pointed out, water will be one of the primary issues for this century. The Grand Prairie Region project addresses aquifer protection and irrigation water supply issues by increasing irrigation efficiencies and utilizing excess surface water from the White River for irrigation. As you are aware, the Corps has been partnering in the construction of the on-farm features of the project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, your irrigation district, and local citizens.

The President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2003 does not include funding to continue this effort. The budget request for the Mississippi River and Tributaries project focuses on its main-stem components and studies and projects whose outputs are related to flood control, navigation, and environmental restoration. Funding for this project is not included in either the House or Senate versions of the appropriations bill; however, action of Congress on the appropriations bill has not been completed.

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The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings

Sincerely,

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