

Dear Ms. Emerson:

Thank you for the statement made on your behalf by Mr. Aaron Washburn of your staff at the Mississippi River Commission public meeting on August 19, 2002, in Tiptonville, Tennessee. In your statement you discussed the Corps response to recent criticism, the Fiscal Year 2003 budget request for the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project, the need to fund shallow-draft harbors, and the St. Johns-New Madrid, Missouri, flood control project.

The Commission appreciates your continued support for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its various water resources projects. The Corps is committed to sustaining the environment while seeking economic and environmental solutions that support and reinforce one another.

The Corps recognizes and appreciates your efforts and those of your colleagues in securing additional funds for the MR&T project. Although the project is 87 percent complete and provides significant flood protection and navigation benefits, there is still additional work to be completed to ensure that the project functions properly and can accommodate the project design flood.

In regard to funding for dredging of shallow-draft harbors, the Commission will continue to inform our Corps of Engineers headquarters of the concerns expressed by you and others on this need.

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The Commission is pleased that review of the final revised Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the St. Johns-New Madrid, Missouri, project has been completed. This milestone could not have been attained without your tireless support and that of local interests.

Thank you again for your presentation at our public meeting. We look forward to hearing from you or members of your staff at any of our future Commission meetings.

Sincerely,

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