

Dear Ms. Favilla:

Thank you for your presentation made before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting held in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 15, 2003. In your statement you specifically addressed issues relative to the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program (UMRS-EMP) and the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) System Navigation Feasibility study.

The Commission recognizes your concerns relative to the appropriations to the UMRS-EMP program. We continue to keep Congress informed relative to the additional capabilities for this program. The EMP currently has six projects under construction with two scheduled for completion in 2004. Sixteen additional projects are in various stages of design and will provide future habitat rehabilitation and enhancement. The Long Term Resource Monitoring Program also continues to provide valuable information to scientists and managers on the upper Mississippi River.

The Commission recognizes the position that your organization has taken to oppose the expansion of the locks and dams on the upper Mississippi River. The UMR-IWW System Navigation Feasibility study has been restructured to give equal consideration to fish and wildlife resources and navigation improvement planning consistent with recommendations from the National Research Council and the Federal Principals Group. The primary goals are to reduce or eliminate commercial traffic delays and improve national and regional economic

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conditions while restoring, protecting, and enhancing the environment. The study team continues to work very closely with the basin stakeholders to ensure the development of a balanced set of tentative alternative plans. Please refer to the study website (<http://www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/umr-iwwsns/>), especially the "Newsletter and Status Reports" section, for regular study updates and additional clarification on a number of study topics and issues. The full economic and environmental evaluations necessary to support a potential recommendation for construction of navigation improvements and implementation of ecosystem restoration measures were completed in October 2003. These tentative alternative plans were presented at a series of

public meetings in October 2003 (see latest newsletter for dates, times, and locations) in order to gain public input prior to making a final recommendation. The final feasibility report is currently scheduled for completion in 2004.

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