

Dear Ms. Favilla:

Thank you for your comments before the Mississippi River Commission during our public meeting held on August 17, 2001, in St. Louis, Missouri. In your statement you discussed strengthening regulations that will protect fragile wetlands along the Mississippi River.

You expressed concern regarding the proposed changes to the Nationwide Permits Program (NWP) and associated general conditions currently available for public comment (Federal Register dated August 9, 2001). You believe that the proposed NWP and general conditions would provide too much flexibility to the regulatory program with complete disregard for the importance of wetlands and the need for stringent environmental review. Although a few of the proposed changes to the NWP and/or general conditions provide removing specific references to acreage or linear-foot requirements, it is noted throughout the Federal Register notice that the Corps maintains the importance of protecting all aquatic resource systems (i.e., waters of the United States, including wetlands). The Corps strives to implement its Regulatory Program as fairly and impartially as possible to the regulated public, while providing protection to the aquatic environment.

The comment period on the proposed NWP and associated general conditions has been extended 15 days from the original closure date of September 24. The St. Louis District will forward your comments to the Corps Headquarters for inclusion into the public record.

The Corps of Engineers will continue its efforts to meet the flood control, navigation, and environmental needs in the Mississippi Valley. Our success is largely attributable to a strong partnership with our local interests.

Thank you again for your participation in St. Louis. The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and looks forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission