

Dear Ms. Flipppo:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting held in Davenport, Iowa, on August 13, 2002. In your statement you expressed your support for the construction of 1200-foot locks and safety concerns for deckhands involved in double lockages.

The need to modernize the system of locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers is being addressed in the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) System Navigation Study. The UMR-IWW System Navigation Study has been restructured to give equal consideration of fish and wildlife resources and navigation improvement planning consistent with recommendations from the National Research Council and the Federal Principals Group. The restructured study will ensure the UMR-IWW system continues to be a nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant commercial navigation system as designated by Congress. The restructured study will address the navigation efficiency needs of the UMR-IWW, the ongoing cumulative effects of navigation, and the ecosystem restoration needs with a goal of attaining an environmentally sustainable navigation system. The full economic and environmental evaluations necessary to support a potential recommendation for construction of navigation improvements and implementation of ecosystem restoration measures will be completed by October 2003. These potential plans will be presented at a series of public meetings beginning in October 2003 to gain public input prior to making a final recommendation. The final feasibility report is currently scheduled for completion in 2004. For more information and details concerning the UMR-IWW System Navigation Study, please refer to the Rock Island District website: <http://www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/umr-iwwsns/>.

-2-

The Corps appreciates your comments and concern for the safety of towboat deckhands during the locking process. Employees at the locks work very closely with barge operators to ensure proper protocols and safety measures are utilized in the locking process. Safety concerns were also identified during the alternative development and evaluation stage of the navigation study. Safety issues for the deckhands and lock

operators will be considered in the final formulation of alternatives.

Thank you again for your comments before the Commission. We appreciate your concern, support, and interest in the viability, efficiency, and safety of our Upper Mississippi River System navigation infrastructure and look forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

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