

Dear Mr. Fontenot:

Thank you for your joint statement with Mr. Doug Sabins submitted for the record during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission in New Orleans, Louisiana, on April 11, 2003, supporting the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment project.

The Commission agrees with you that this assessment is needed and recognizes that it would be another step in realizing recreation and wildlife habitat potential, in concert with flood protection and navigation, for the lower Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers. The Commission supports funding for this effort and the continued implementation of the enclosed U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Operating Principles. However, with the many competing interests for Federal funding, including the war on terrorism, homeland security, and the requirement to balance the Federal budget, the funding level in the General Investigations Fiscal Year 2004 President's budget request was not sufficient to include new start funding for this effort.

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

Enclosure