

Dear Mr. Fox:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting held in West Memphis, Arkansas, on August 19, 2003. In your presentation you addressed the limited funding levels for the Planning Assistance to States Program (PAS) and the need for a holistic and comprehensive groundwater and surface water study in the Memphis Metropolitan area.

The Commission is aware that there are an increased number of requests for studies under the PAS program, yet the funding level per state remains at \$500,000. Change to the funding levels per state requires Congressional authorization. Congress allocates the overall budget and may earmark funds for certain PAS projects either within available funds or from specifically added funds. Within the Congressional allocation, the Headquarters of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allocates money to its divisions, partially based upon prior year's execution, and then the divisions allocate money among its districts, based upon both execution and proposed program. Per your request, the Mississippi Valley Division reviewed the funding levels provided for this program for the State of Tennessee and, in particular, for the Shelby County area, to determine if the area is receiving its fair share of funds. The review indicated that Shelby County has received its fair share of PAS funding allocated to the Memphis District in recent years.

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Regarding a holistic and comprehensive groundwater and surface water study in the Memphis Metropolitan area, the Commission is aware that increased residential and economic development in the area is depleting the area's wetlands surcharge areas. This has created a need to analyze the quality and quantity of ground and surface water. As you know, both authorization and appropriations are needed to initiate a study.

The Commission acknowledges your gratitude for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers efforts on the Wolf River Restoration project, the Nonconnah Creek Extension study, and the Millington

Big Creek study. We look forward to continuing our partnership on these and future studies and projects in the Shelby County area.

The Commission appreciates receiving your views 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