

Dear Mr. Gautreau:

During the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on April 11, 2003, Mr. Mike Babin presented comments on areas of concern to your office. Submitted for the record was a formal statement that expresses the views of your office and recommends improvements and continuing work on the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) flood control project. The responses below follow the order of topics submitted in your statement to the Commission.

Recommendations for Improvements in the Pontchartrain Levee District

As noted in your statement, all mainline Mississippi River levees within the Pontchartrain Levee District are up to or above the designated grade.

Slope pavement jobs for the East Bank Gap closure are scheduled for award this fiscal year. The plans and specifications are in local review. We have sufficient funding this fiscal year and anticipate that Fiscal Year 2004 funding will be sufficient to complete closure of all east bank pavement gaps.

The New Orleans District will work with the levee district to replace the sand/clay gravel in the levee crown with crushed limestone. The stone would be purchased by the Corps and spread by the Pontchartrain Levee District. The work will be scheduled as funding and priorities permit.

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Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity, Hurricane Protection, St. Charles Parish

The New Orleans District is continuing efforts to expedite the construction of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project in St. Charles Parish. Although the Corps has not received the appropriation for Fiscal Year 2004, we anticipate the need to secure additional project funds to maintain the construction schedule. The New Orleans District is proceeding as rapidly as possible with the design and construction of this project.

Construction of the Cross Bayou Drainage Structure is underway and we expect to complete work by June 2003. The St. Rose Drainage Structure was awarded in October 2002. The Almedia and Walker Canal drainage structures were awarded in January 2003. Completion of those structures is scheduled for 2004. The work at the gap of the Gulf South Pipeline will begin in July 2003 and is scheduled to be completed by June 2004. The contract to close the final gap at the Canadian National Railroad crossing is scheduled for award in August 2003. This will provide a closed system of protection for the east bank of St. Charles Parish.

Amite River and Tributaries, Bayou Manchac Watershed

The Commission appreciates your support of the study to evaluate the flooding and ecosystem restoration in the Bayou Manchac Watershed and realizes the need to maintain the project schedule. The Project Management Plan was revised and forwarded to you on March 13, 2003, for review and comment. While the District continues to refine the project schedule, they are not able to move forward due to lack of funds.

The Commission appreciates the support, cooperation, and assistance provided by the Pontchartrain Levee District.

A copy of this letter is being forwarded to Mr. Mike Babin.

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Thank you for your presentation. The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and looks forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army

President Designee, Mississippi  
River Commission