

Dear Mr. Gautreau:

Thank you for the presentation given on your behalf by Mr. Mike Babin during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on March 7, 2002.

Mr. Babin's oral comments and formal statement submitted for the record present recommendations and the main topics of concern to your levee district. Responses to your recommendations for improvements in the Pontchartrain Levee District are given below in the order outlined in the statement submitted at the meeting.

Recommendations for Improvements in the Pontchartrain Levee District

Lack of funding for the Mississippi River levee improvements within the Pontchartrain Levee District continues to delay closing the slope pavement gaps. This work will be scheduled as soon as funding permits. As was mentioned in the statement, revetment maintenance work was performed in the Manchac Bend area in October 2001. New Orleans District staff will continue to monitor sensitive riverbank areas to identify any problems that may develop. Funds for the 81 Mile Point foreshore dike are requested in the Fiscal Year 2003 Congressional budget, and construction is scheduled to start in August 2003.

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Many levee areas of the Pontchartrain Levee District have sand/clay gravel surfacing on the levee crown. The New Orleans District will work with the Pontchartrain Levee District to replace the sand/clay gravel surface with crushed limestone. The stone would be purchased by the Corps of Engineers and spread by the levee district. Funding for this purpose has been requested for Fiscal Year 2003 and future years.

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 Fiscal Year 2003 appropriations process is not yet completed, the Corps anticipates the need to secure additional project funds to maintain the construction schedule. If necessary, additional funds may be transferred into the project during Fiscal Year 2003. The District is proceeding as rapidly as possible with the design and construction of this project.

Floodwalls at Goodhope and I-310 and the Bayou Trepagnier Drainage Structure are complete. Construction of the Cross Bayou Drainage Structure began in 2001. Unfortunately, the contractor has experienced financial difficulties and has withdrawn from the project. The District plans to complete this contract with another contractor. The St. Rose Drainage Structure is scheduled for award in June 2002. Construction of the Reach 1A second lift contract is complete. Work will begin later in 2002 on the remaining drainage structures, Almedia and Walker Canal and the Canadian National/Illinois Central Railroad swing gate. Completion of those structures is scheduled for 2004, thus providing a closed system of protection for the east bank of St. Charles Parish.

Amite River and Tributaries, Bayou Manchac Watershed

The feasibility study to determine alternatives to alleviate flooding in the Bayou Manchac Watershed is scheduled for completion by September 2002.

We understand your concerns in regard to changes made in the extent of time and number of participants during the inspection trip in your area. The time and locations of our public meetings frequently change due to other commitments during the inspection trip, and the riding portions must also be modified accordingly. As you know, we must also limit the numbers of guests invited to be on board the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI due to Coast Guard safety restrictions. In order to include as many organizations as possible, sometimes fewer representatives are invited on the riding portion of the inspection. We trust that the Pontchartrain Levee District and other local interest organizations and agencies will understand

our occasional enforced restraints in order to accommodate the many people interested in the Corps projects and issues.

The Commission appreciates receiving the views of the Pontchartrain Levee District and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

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