

Dear Senator Gautreaux:

Thank you for your presentation during the Mississippi River Commission public meeting held in Morgan City, Louisiana, on August 22, 2003.

In May 2002, the New Orleans District signed a Feasibility Cost-Sharing Agreement with the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District for a 3-year feasibility study of the deepening of the Atchafalaya River and Bayous Chene, Boeuf, and Black navigation channels. Justification for a deeper channel is a major challenge, given the high cost of maintaining the currently authorized 20-foot Atchafalaya River bar channel. We are hopeful that our ongoing efforts to reduce the maintenance requirements of the 20-foot channel will also help reduce the incremental maintenance requirements for a deeper channel. We will consider project depths up to 35 feet in the study of the feasibility of deepening the navigation channels. The study completion schedule has slipped from May 2005 to January 2006 due to a shortfall in Federal funding for Fiscal Year 2003; however, it appears that Fiscal Year 2004 funding will be adequate to continue the study without further delay. We will continue to investigate and evaluate means to improve the operability of the channel at Morgan City and the problem of fluff.

We are exploring various alternatives to restore reefs and barrier islands throughout coastal Louisiana under the Louisiana Coastal Area Comprehensive Study. The New Orleans District will

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keep you informed about the results of the investigation to restore reefs in the Wax Lake Outlet area.

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