

Dear Mr. Gilder:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on March 6, 2002. In your statement you requested dredging assistance in the Greenville area.

The Greenville reach of the Mississippi River has a long history of instability that has required frequent maintenance dredging and contributed to safety problems for the towing industry in the vicinity of the Greenville Bridge. Because of the complexity of the overall problem, extensive modeling efforts were conducted to determine the most effective and economical solution to provide a safe and dependable navigation channel in this reach.

Following the high-water years in the mid-1970's, the channel from Warfield Point to Vaucluse was wide and relatively shallow, without an easily defined or maintained navigation channel. Although some deposition occurred in front of your facility in the early 1980's prior to the construction of the dikes to which you refer, there has been no appreciable change in height of the bar since that time. Bed elevations today are very similar to those that were found in 1987 and 1988, with the highest point being just below the average low water level. This means that tows have essentially the same access to your site today that they have had for nearly 15 years. The last two low-water seasons have been very severe and have no doubt affected your operations. However, as you are well aware, when such low stages occurred in the past, access to your site from the channel was not assured because the ends of the deeper area near the bank were frequently blocked. Therefore, it is not clear that the Corps of Engineers' efforts substantially aggravated the problems to which you refer.

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We recognize the factors that make your location attractive for the service you provide to the navigation industry. Over the years, we have developed alternative plans to accommodate your needs as much as possible. Numerous other members of the towing industry were consulted on their needs as well. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee access from the navigation channel to entities that locate their businesses along the riverbank. The various Rivers and Harbors Acts that have been

enacted by Congress over the years require us to maintain navigation and flood control in an effective, economical manner. These same Acts clearly limit the activities that private industry or individuals may take, particularly when those activities may interfere with the Corps' ability to carry out its responsibilities. Also, the Rivers and Harbors Acts do not provide for compensation to individuals or other entities that may be affected by the Corps' activities carried out under the Acts.

We believe our efforts to improve the Greenville reach have been successful overall. Most of the significant construction needs have been completed, particularly in the vicinity of your facility. The increasing stability of the reach may lead to usable conditions at your site for all but the lowest river stages. You may wish to consider private dredging for those unusual conditions.

Thank you again for your comments before the Commission. We appreciate receiving your views 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