

Dear Mr. Gilfoil:

Thank you for your warm welcome and presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Lake Providence, Louisiana, on August 21, 2002. In your statement you discussed the Administration's funding cuts for maintenance dredging and the economic impacts.

The Commission recognizes the importance of maintenance dredging of the Ouachita-Black Waterway, Red River Waterway, and the Lake Providence Port. The Administration views commercial navigation as a core mission because of the widespread benefits provided to the nation. The Administration places a funding priority on those ports and harbors that have high commercial cargo volumes or low costs per ton-mile of commercial cargo. These projects of interest to you have been identified as "low-use commercial channels or harbors" do not meet an assessment of national priorities.

The ports and waterways you mentioned are vital to Louisiana, and we recognize that devastating economic impacts could result for the users of the ports and waterways if annual maintenance dredging ceases. Therefore, it is critical to keep the users of the port and waterways informed as well as the local community and Congressional delegation.

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Thank you again for the presentation on behalf of the Port of Lake Providence. 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