

Dear Mr. Gilfoil:

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 discussed the Administration's proposed funding cut for the maintenance dredging of Lake Providence Port and the economic effects it will cause in your region.

Lake Providence Port is funded in Fiscal Year 2002 for maintenance dredging which should begin in August 2002, depending on river stages. Unfortunately, the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2003 includes only funding for surveys of the port. The Administration views commercial navigation as a core mission because of the widespread benefits it provides to the nation. Because most of the larger ports and harbors provide a more significant economic return to the nation compared to smaller harbors, only the larger harbors are included in the budget. Therefore, it is critical to the project to keep the users of the port informed, as well as the local community and your Congressional delegation, of the importance of smaller harbors to local and regional economies.

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,

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