

Dear Mr. Lamensdorf:

Thank you for the statement made on your behalf by Mr. Scott Coopwood during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission held in Mayersville, Mississippi, on August 20, 2003. In your statement you referenced the unfounded allegations by environmental groups regarding previously constructed projects in the Yazoo Basin and stated that similar allegations are being voiced with respect to the Yazoo Backwater Reformulation project. You also commended the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for their interagency cooperation to reconcile the scope of the wetland evaluation impacts associated with the Yazoo Backwater project in order to create a better project.

The Commission appreciates the Delta Council detailing some of the history of the reformulation efforts on the Yazoo Basin projects. We continue to seriously consider the claims by environmental groups regarding the Yazoo Backwater project. We are attempting to evaluate each claim on its own merit and will address these in the final report.

The Vicksburg District has been working very closely with the EPA Region IV staff to address wetland concerns. This included 2 weeks of intense field verification of over 150 sites selected by EPA staff utilizing their Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program. Hopefully, this combined effort will result in agreement by both agencies as to the number of acres of wetlands in the project area, the number of acres impacted, and the extent of the impact.

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The Commission thanks the Delta Council for its support of projects in the Yazoo Mississippi Delta.

We appreciate 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