

Dear Mr. Norman:

Thank you for your remarks before the Mississippi River Commission during our public meeting held on August 17, 2001, in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Corps of Engineers is a water resource and engineering agency dedicated to maintaining a proper and healthy balance of the multi-uses of the waterways. The Corps recognizes that along with economic stability and growth, the environment directly impacts the quality of life enjoyed by those living in the area.

In response to your comments regarding the navigation study, on August 2, 2001, the Director of Civil Works, on behalf of the Chief of Engineers and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, instructed the Corps of Engineers to resume the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study. The refocused study will develop a plan to be used as a framework for the environmental sustainability of the river's navigation system, ecosystem, and floodplain management, while preserving the operational characteristics of each. A collaborative process is underway with all stakeholders of the Upper Mississippi River to prepare an interim report on a comprehensive management plan by July 2002 with a final report due later.

The National Federal Senior Principals Task Force was established by the Corps of Engineers to provide national-level balance and guidance on important economic and environmental

issues to assist in bringing this study to completion and to advise the Corps on appropriate study adjustments to address the National Research Council recommendations. The Principals Group includes senior Washington administrators of the Maritime Administration, the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Corps of Engineers. The Corps intends to continue to involve this group throughout the life of this study. A regional version of the group also provides Federal interagency input for the study. As Commander of the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division, I am chairman of this Regional Interagency Work Group.

The Corps will continue its efforts to meet the flood control, navigation, and environmental needs in the Mississippi Valley. Our success is largely attributable to a strong partnership with local interests and groups such as yours.

Thank you again for your participation at our St. Louis meeting. 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 Designee, Mississippi
River Commission