Dear Mr. Rankins:

Thank you for the statement filed for the record during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission in Greenville, Mississippi, on April 9, 2003. In your statement, you requested assistance with the bridge located south of the community of Murphy in southeast Washington County.

Representatives from the Vicksburg District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners met with the Washington County Engineer, Mr. Marcus Hooker, on May 2, 2003, to discuss problems and identify potential assistance with the bridge.

After the meeting, the Vicksburg District representatives made a site visit to the bridge. Inspection of the streambanks revealed stable top banks with some erosion in the middle of the stream. Concrete rubble and rock were visible upstream and downstream of the bridge. The bridge deck showed settlement near the middle of the bridge. Soil has eroded from around the slope inclinometer nearest the stream channel, resulting in damage to the inclinometer. However, some useful data can likely be obtained from both inclinometers to help determine the stability of the slope. They will be read within the next few weeks, and information obtained will be provided to Mr. Hooker.

In 1974, and in subsequent correspondence in 1991 and 1994, the Washington County Board of Supervisors expressed in writing to the Vicksburg District their concern with the condition of the bridge. The Vicksburg District’s position has not changed

from that expressed in our prior correspondence in 1994. Copies of the following 1994 correspondence are enclosed.

a. A copy of a letter from Mr. Marcus Hooker, dated July 18, 1994, to Vicksburg District.

b. A copy of a letter from Vicksburg District, dated November 8, 1994, to Mr. Hooker.

c. A copy of a letter from Mr. Marcus Hooker, dated November 11, 1994, to Vicksburg District.

The stream has not degraded enough to cause the problems that now exist with the bridge. Therefore, the District's position continues to be that the bridge problems were not caused by the work done by the Corps on the Big Sunflower River, but rather are a result of problems that occurred during construction of the bridge as discussed in the enclosed correspondence. This condition has become worse due to regular use of the bridge by farm equipment and vehicles exceeding the original 15-ton weight limit. Mr. Hooker has reduced this limit to 10 tons.

I regret that the Corps cannot provide direct assistance with bridge repairs.

We appreciate receiving your views and look forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission

Enclosures