

Dear Mr. Rund:

Thank you for your remarks before the Mississippi River Commission during our public meeting held on August 17, 2001, in St. Louis, Missouri. In your statement you discussed several issues including the inland navigation system on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, the comprehensive river management plan for flood control along the Mississippi River, and the Flow Frequency 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 Commission recognizes your interest in an effort to strike a balance among the various standards used by bordering states to regulate projects along the Mississippi, specifically uniform standards between states for mitigation of water level impacts associated with projects such as levee maintenance and improvements. The Comprehensive Plan was authorized by the Water Resource Development Act of 1999 to address systemic flood damage reduction and related water resource problems in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The plan was not funded in the budget submission. However, funding is in the House and Senate mark-up of the Fiscal Year 2002 budget, and we anticipate that it will be in the final bill. If funded, the Corps is dedicated to completing the plan on time and within budget.

The Upper Mississippi River System Flow Frequency Study will provide updated flood profiles for the Lower Missouri, Upper Mississippi, and Illinois Rivers. These profiles are fundamental to all aspects of floodplain management. The study made significant progress during Fiscal Year 2001 and is expected to be fully funded (\$1.2 million) in Fiscal Year 2002. The Flow Frequency Study is on track for completion in March 2003.

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 organizations such as yours.

Thank you again for your participation at our St. Louis hearing. The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and looks forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

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