

Dear Mr. Skerrett:

Thank you for your statement filed for the record of the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission held in Morgan City, Louisiana, on August 23, 2001, in which you discussed the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana, project, particularly the Buffalo Cove Water Management Unit and Fiscal Year 2002 funding levels.

The Corps of Engineers continues to pursue implementation of water management unit features in the Atchafalaya Basin. The New Orleans District is currently pursuing several initiatives, including: (a) modifications to Bayou Eugene within the Buffalo Cove Water Management Unit which is scheduled for construction in November 2001; (b) planning for other features within the Buffalo Cove Water Management Unit, with construction planned for late Fiscal Year 2002; and (c) planning for features within the Flat Lake Water Management Unit beginning in Fiscal Year 2002. The construction schedules for Bayou Eugene and Buffalo Cove are dependent on obtaining rights-of-entry from the property owners. All efforts are being fully coordinated with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources as the local sponsor and other stakeholders to ensure that their requirements are considered and incorporated as appropriate into the overall management plan.

The Corps acknowledges your concerns about the need to fund the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana, construction project to its full capability. The President's budget submission for Fiscal Year 2002 includes \$7.16 million, and

the House and Senate have proposed \$7.16 million and \$8.06 million, respectively. We appreciate the support you requested from the President on this project. We have revised our expressed capability up to the amount of \$10 million additional funds, if appropriated by the Conference Committee.

Thank you again for providing your statement for the record. 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