

Dear Mr. Sturdivant:

Thank you for the statement presented on your behalf by Bishop David Cotton before the Mississippi River Commission at our public meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, on August 20, 2001. Bishop Cotton expressed several concerns and issues of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board.

The Commission shares your concerns regarding the timely completion of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project, as well as one of its major components, the Mississippi River Levees project. Although the MR&T project is about 87 percent complete and provides significant flood control and navigation benefits, there is still additional work to be completed to ensure that the project functions properly and can accommodate the project design flood.

The Commission acknowledges your concerns and frustrations regarding the Big Sunflower River Maintenance project and those who are opposed to the project. The Corps is committed to answering these challenges by providing projects dedicated to sustaining the environment while giving equal consideration to flood damage reduction for residents of the Delta. The Vicksburg District has completed the design for clearing and snagging of Dowling Bayou. Following a favorable Mississippi Supreme Court decision on the water quality certificate, the District will be ready to advertise this contract. The next item of work, Item 2, is scheduled for award in April 2002. Work is currently underway to complete the National Environmental Policy Act requirements. This documentation should be ready for public review in November 2001.

In regard to the Upper Yazoo Projects (UYP), the Commission shares your desires to continue and complete the UYP as soon as possible. Corps contractors are making progress on this project, which is currently ahead of schedule. All of the channel improvement work underway should be completed by the end of the year. Completion of this work will extend the benefits of the UYP to the City of Greenwood and will afford the flood control reservoirs an improved outlet channel. The Commission acknowledges the successful efforts of your Levee Board and the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association in securing the needed funds to sustain this ongoing work. The Corps will continue to pursue the execution of all the Yazoo Basin projects as rapidly as possible within available funds.

The Commission appreciates the kind remarks concerning the Vicksburg District staff and the progress made as partners on water resource projects in the Delta.

Thank you again for the presentation on behalf of your levee board. 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