

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Thank you for your statement before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting held in West Memphis, Arkansas, on August 19, 2003. In your statement you provided a brief status report on the Bayou Meto Basin, Arkansas, project and requested the Commission's support in three specific areas.

The Commission supports your request for an expeditious review and processing of the general reevaluation report. The draft report was submitted to the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) on October 9, 2003. The MVD staff will work with both the Memphis District and Corps Headquarters to complete the review process and submit the report to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for approval. Memphis District will continue coordination of all aspects of project development with the Bayou Meto Water Management District to include report processing. The Chief of Engineers approval and submission of the report to the ASA(CW) for approval follows the review process comprised of reviews by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, general public, and state and pertinent agencies, along with the Environmental Impact Statement filing. A construction start date is contingent upon approval by the ASA(CW) and appropriation of construction funds.

Fiscal Year 2004 funds could be utilized to complete report processing and conduct design activities. As you are aware, the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2004 does not include funding for this project; however, the House Report (108-212) recommends \$500,000.

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The Commission recognizes the efforts of the Bayou Meto Water Management District to secure non-Federal funding in Fiscal Year 2004 to complete the review, continue detailed design studies, and prepare the project for construction.

The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

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