

Dear Mr. Wanamaker:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Lake Providence, Louisiana, on August 21, 2002. In your statement you presented the following items of concern:

a. Discussed events during the recent high water of May 2002 and specifically noted the sandboils located at Buck Chute and Black Bayou.

b. Mentioned concerns of a landowner adjacent to Item 502-L regarding scours that occurred when the water receded following the high-water event.

c. Expressed pleasure with progress on the main-line Mississippi River levee system.

d. Noted your concern over the lack of progress on the Big Sunflower River Maintenance project.

e. Discussed the Yazoo Backwater project and the Levee Board's belief that the project offers an economic and environmental balance.

f. Expressed appreciation for maintenance gravel for the main-line Mississippi River levees in your district.

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g. Requested that the Vicksburg District repair a failure in the upper bank paving adjacent to Mayersville, Mississippi.

h. Discussed levee slides along the main-line Mississippi River levees.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was pleased to work with the Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners during the high-water season. During this period, the Vicksburg District observed the sandboils in the vicinity of Buck Chute where relief wells were installed in 1999. The Levee Board quickly sandbagged this area, and both the Levee Board and Vicksburg District continued to monitor the area throughout the high-water

period. Because of the problems experienced in this location this year, the District has undertaken detailed soil borings in this area, along with some additional surveys. Once these data are gathered, the Corps will make an analysis to determine an appropriate action. The Vicksburg District staff will contact your office for input during this study effort.

In addition, sandboils were identified in Black Bayou, north of Greenville, where your Levee Board constructed a sandbag weir to control the problem. We have received soil data from that location and do not believe a major problem exists at this time. The Vicksburg District will monitor this location during future high-water events to determine if a structural solution is needed.

We appreciate your bringing to our attention the problem with a landowner adjacent to Item 502-L. Representatives from the Vicksburg District inspected the site to determine if removal of borrow from an adjacent field contributed to the erosion or whether it occurred naturally from the river. Due to crops currently growing on the site, a determination could not be made. Another site inspection will be made in the fall after the crops have been harvested. The Vicksburg District staff will keep you informed of the findings.

With regard to main-levee Mississippi River levees construction, Item 502-L is complete except for acceptance of

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turfing. The turf will be inspected this fall to determine if adequate coverage has been achieved. If turfing has been established, the District will contact your Levee Board to discuss returning this portion of the levee to you.

The contract for Item 496-L is making good progress. Areas are being topped out on the north end of the item, and dredged berms have been covered with 1 foot of topsoil from the dike where grass can begin growing. The contractor on Item 477-L is clearing borrow areas 1 and 2 and hauling material to the north end of this item.

We share your concern with the lack of progress on the Big Sunflower River Maintenance project. The Board of Mississippi Commissioners is to be commended for efforts in acquiring rights-of-way for Item 2. The Vicksburg District has completed plans and specifications for channel maintenance items 2 and 4. Once the State Water Quality Permit is received and environmental documentation completed, the first dredging contract can be awarded. Funds to continue design and real estate activities for additional items have been included in the Senate Report. However, as you know, these funds are dependent on inclusion in the final appropriations bill.

The Corps appreciates the working relationship we have with the Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners on the Yazoo Backwater Reformulation project. We are continuing to address comments received on the draft report. A request for a deviation from the National Economic Development plan was forwarded to the Mississippi River Commission in August 2002. The request will be forwarded to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works for concurrence. Congress furnished funds in Fiscal Year 2002 to continue to advance engineering and design for this project. A portion of these funds was used with the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) for design to relocate the Highway 465 bridge over Steele Bayou. We appreciate your support in getting MDOT to execute the Memorandum of Understanding for this design.

Maintenance gravel is being furnished to your Board under the ongoing supply contract, and plans are to complete work within the next 2 weeks.

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The failure of the upper bank paving adjacent to Mayersville has been identified as a specific site for repair under the Vicksburg District's stone bank repair contract for the fall of 2002.

In regard to levee slides along the main-levee Mississippi River levees, currently 8 out of the 13 levee slides in your district have been repaired. The remaining slides are scheduled to be completed during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2003.

Thank you again for your comments before the Commission.  
We appreciate receiving your views 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