



State of Louisiana

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M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.  
GOVERNOR

October 1, 2001

Brigadier General Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.  
Division Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division  
Post Office Box 80  
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39181-0800

Dear General Arnold:

In response to your earlier letter, I am pleased that you are seeking the cooperation and support of the state of Louisiana and the other participating states for implementing Section 402 - Lower Mississippi River Natural Resources Assessment - of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA 2000). We certainly support the importance of this assessment of information for river-related management, natural resource habitat needs and the need for river-related recreation and access, as Section 402 authorizes for the Lower Mississippi River. We look forward to cooperating with you and others on this Assessment. We greatly appreciate Mr. Don Basham of your staff discussing this issue with all the states at the annual meeting of the multi-state Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee.

We do not believe that the wording nor the intent of Section 402 was for the normal cost sharing requirements of a traditional feasibility study to apply to this Assessment and understand that you have recommended that the first phase of the Assessment be a 100% federally funded reconnaissance study conducted in cooperation with the participating states and others. We would urge you to immediately initiate this phase of the study. We understand that Section 225 of the WRDA 2000 permits the states as non-federal sponsors to cost share through in-kind services. The state of Louisiana has the resources and ability to collect and provide important information and data and provide expertise which will be critical and essential to the conduct of the Assessment and subsequent report to Congress. We are willing to collect and provide needed information and expertise by agreement with your agency. The report to Congress should provide the recommendations and guidelines which will allow the state of Louisiana to determine its future role and involvement in any resulting activities. We look forward to working with you as a non-federal sponsor on the Assessment and the resulting report to Congress.

With the wise use of the Lower Mississippi River's natural resources, sustainable increases to the economy of our state and the other Lower Mississippi River states can occur without impacting existing economic and other uses of the river. Last year over 10.8 million people in the Lower

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Mississippi Alluvial Valley participated in fishing and wildlife-related outdoor recreation, excluding hunting. They spent \$5.9 billion on such items as food, fuel, lodging and equipment. These kinds of activities and revenues are important to the economy of the region and to our state and the well-being of our citizens. The Assessment and report to Congress could contain valuable recommendations which would sustain the river's natural resources and increase the supporting activities and revenues.

The state contacts for the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee will be the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries indicated below. Again, I appreciate you seeking the cooperation and support of the state of Louisiana and the other six participating states in this important regional Assessment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information or support.

Sincerely,



M. J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.

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