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August 14, 2015

Major General Michael Wehr, President, and
Members of the Mississippi River Commission:

My name is Rice "Pete" Burns. I currently serve as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority (Semo Port) in Scott City MO.

Semo Port was established in 1975. The slackwater harbor opened in 1990. In the 25 years since the harbor opened, the Port has grown from an idea to a major asset in our area. The Port moves approximately 900,000 tons via barge and 600,000 tons by rail.

There are six tenants at the Port – Girardeau Stevedores, First Missouri Terminals, Midwest Agri-Chemico, Consolidated Grain & Barge, Missouri Fibre, and SEMO Milling.

Semo Port is a valuable asset to our area, our state, and our nation. Approximately 130 full time jobs have been created as well as 150-plus truck driving jobs. It is an excellent venue for our local farmers to ship farm products for export to the world through Gulf ports and receive products such as fertilizer, steel, and other dry bulk chemicals.

For the Port to operate, its harbor must be dredged yearly. Lance Engle, Dredging Projects Manager for the St Louis District, has advised us that Semo Port harbor will be dredged this season. The St Louis District has an agreement with the Louisville District to bring the dredge to Semo Port once it has finished with the Ohio River, which will be in October. We have had a couple of our tenants' mention that due to recent high water, there has been more silt than normal.


In years past, Semo Port was normally first on the list for dredging in the St Louis District. This normally took place around Labor Day weekend. When the dredge shows up in October, corn harvest would already have taken place, the grain elevators at Semo Port could run into a problem loading barges due to silt issues. We have asked if it might be possible to dredge sooner than October 1, preferably several weeks earlier.

We look forward to having the Corps of Engineers again perform dredging at Semo Port. We appreciate the support and cooperation of the Mississippi River Commission and the Corps. We hope that the Corps can continue to regularly perform dredging work at the public port harbors along the Mississippi River.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I have with me today other members of our Board as well as our Executive Director, Mr. Dan Overbey. If you have any questions we would be pleased to answer them for you.

Sincerely,

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI
REGIONAL PORT AUTHORITY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rice Pete Burns".

Rice "Pete" Burns
Chairman, Board of Commissioners