

STATEMENT PRESENT TO:

Mississippi River Commission  
Vicksburg, MS  
August 19, 2015

Good morning General Weir and other members of the Mississippi River Commission.

As most of you know, I am Reynold Minsky, President of the Fifth Louisiana Levee Board, and I am here today on behalf of the Board of Commissioners for the Fifth Louisiana Levee District.

We are pleased to acknowledge that since our last meeting, the Levee District has accepted Item 365-R back into the maintenance program. Also, construction has continued on Item 420-R, and we are expecting construction to be completed with the exception of turving in the very near future. This project has been a nightmare from the beginning and we appreciate everyone's efforts with this project.

Items 357-R and 422-R are substantially complete with the exception of turf establishment.

Items 377-R has been awarded but due to the high water, contractor has not been able to begin. The Levee District has recently released the rights-of-way needed for Item 374-R.

Rights-of-way have also recently been released to USACE for relief well work in Madison Parish. The project will provide relief wells to near the Madison Parish Port.

Also, Items 398-R and 416-R are still in the design phase.

Our Levee District is very grateful for the extra funding that allowed us to proceed with the new projects this year. We are also very pleased with the way the Louisiana Delegation was able to provide emergency funding to acquire the rights-of-way needed. In the days of scarce funding, it is nice to know that others realize the importance of a strong and secure Mississippi River Levee.

One thing we would like to see gain a little more attention in our district is the groundwater issues in Northeast Louisiana. The current water levels have been decreasing for many years now, and with the number of farmers pulling from this great resource to irrigate farms, we feel that a coordinated response is needed to address this before it becomes a crisis for our region. Along with the depleting water levels, there have also been numerous reports of salt intrusion in the irrigation wells within our district. In my opinion, this causes great concern and reasoning as to why we should direct some of our focus on the use of surface water as opposed to ground water.

I feel this has been a great year for both the Levee District and USACE, and like always, it has been a pleasure working with everyone. We at the Levee District look forward to the joint effort to help insure better flood protection for the people in the Fifth Louisiana Levee District.

Reynold S. Minsky  
President, Fifth Louisiana Levee District  
102 Burnside Drive  
Tallulah, La 71282