

**STATEMENT OF  
THE LITTLE RIVER DRAINAGE DISTRICT  
MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION HIGH-WATER HEARING  
April 11, 2016**

Major General Michael Wehr, President  
Mississippi River Commission

General Wehr and Members of the Commission:

My name is W. Dustin Boatwright. I am the Chief Engineer of The Little River Drainage District (LRDD) headquartered in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Our District is a major contributor to the St. Francis Basin watershed. The Corps is authorized to make major improvements within the watershed of the St. Francis Basin, which is an integral part of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project (MR&T).

All authorized work in our District for new construction and enlargements has been completed. The remaining responsibility of the Corps of Engineers is to maintain those features Congress authorized.

We are grateful for all of the work done by the Memphis District Corps of Engineers. Without your assistance much of this work would not have been done due to a limitation of District funds. We make the following requests to you today.

1. Excavation maintenance on the following channels which are under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Memphis Districts major maintenance responsibility: Ditch No. 1 Upper and Ditch No. 251 (North of Highway EE), Ditch No. 290, Ditch No. 39. All four of these channels are main outlets for LRDD channels. All four channels are in poor condition with heavy vegetation growth, shoaling, and sedimentation. The current condition is causing damage to private property, state and county roadways, and LRDD's upstream channels.

Ditch No. 290 is in the worst condition of the channels mentioned previously. It has become extremely difficult to live and farm in the area drained by this channel. LRDD has worked with the adjacent landowners on the west side in preparation for excavation work. No brush or tree removal is necessary due to the ongoing minor maintenance by LRDD & the adjacent landowners. The channel maintenance will consist of excavation and spoil shaping only. Currently the project area has been surveyed by the Memphis

District and is shovel ready for work to begin. LRDD hereby requests the Memphis District finalize the design of Ditch No. 290 and solicit a contractor to perform the work as soon as possible.

2. Repair the active erosion on Ditch No. 1 along the left descending bank approximately one-half (1/2) mile upstream of Highway "62" in New Madrid County, Missouri. The channel continues to undercut the levee on the eastside bank. This levee has provided protection from flooding for nearly a century. There are a dozen homes and farming operations which would be devastated if the levee were to breach. Nearly two years ago LRDD was informed of plans to correct this erosion with Memphis District's hired labor crew. We request an update on this matter.
3. Repair levee Slides on the Headwater Diversion Channel Levee resulting from the historic winter flood of 2016.
4. Repair and armor scours along the Castor River Diversion Channel near the toe of the West Basin Levee System. The scours were caused by the winter flood of this year.
5. Repair an active scour on the levee separating the Ditch No. 81 watershed from the Ditch No. 1 watershed near Hornersville, Missouri directly south of the Missouri Department of Conservation access bridge.
6. Provide technical support for the electrical work updates to the Treasure Island Pump Station. Currently the transformers are located on power poles. In order to make the structure more resilient LRDD and Pemiscot-Dunklin Electrical Cooperative are proposing to place the transformers on a concrete pad on top of the levee. Since the Memphis District designs and inspects this facility we request their technical expertise to perform the work during the summer of 2016.

This concludes the request of the Little River Drainage District. Please give these items careful consideration. At this time I have a few general comments I would like to make.

I am deeply concerned with what the future may hold for those of us who live and work in the Mississippi River Valley. Looking back at the history of the Mississippi River over the past 10 years we have since had 10 of the top 20 floods at Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Looking even further back, 23 years, to the previous flood of record in 1993, we have seen 16 of the top 20 historic crests on the Mississippi River near Cape Girardeau. Though many people speculate to the reason for the flooding; climate change, weather cycling (El Niño), or coincidence, the fact remains flooding is occurring more frequently and at higher stages than it has in the past.

The big question is are we investing in maintaining and building the infrastructure necessary to ensure people and property are protected from these events? In addition are we investing to ensure our economic viability, in the way of commerce, for the future? If you look at the funding trends of Congress the answer is clearly NO!

Following the winter of 2016 The Little River Drainage District began an initiative in support infrastructure investment for flood control and navigation (commerce). The District initiated this effort in the form of a resolution supporting three (3) big picture messages for the entire Mississippi River Valley. To date the resolution has been passed by thirty (30) entities including cities, drainage districts, levee district, river conservancy districts, and ports. The resolutions passed to date represent nearly 17 million acres and more than 7.2 million people in the Mississippi Valley. Passage of this resolution provides broad support from elected officials (board members, commissioners, mayors) who represent businesses, agriculture, households, and other stakeholders throughout the entire Mississippi Valley. The following three (3) key messages are outlined in the resolution.

1. Support yearly federal funding of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project for operation and maintenance in the amount of \$500 Million, and \$2 Billion to recapitalize, repair, and restoration of system before the next flood event. The system, in place today, will not pass the “project design flood”.
2. Support federal legislation providing local sponsors, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Mississippi River Commission, the authority to streamline the federal regulatory process (red tape) to spend federal and local dollars directly on projects, not on permits and not environmental studies, to protect people, in order to protect people, property, and provide reliable commercial navigation (commerce). Many of these projects have been in place for nearly 100 years yet we are having to “reinvent the wheel” prior to operation and maintenance activities.
3. Support and delivery of a comprehensive flood control approach for the upper Mississippi River Basin north of Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

The Mississippi River is the life line of the Mid-West and the backbone of the United States; in the way of commerce and national security. We cannot simply sit idle while flooding and unreliable commerce cripple the valley. The time to invest is now. We must stop living off the backs of our forefathers and invest for the future of our country.

This concludes my remarks. Thank you for your time and attention. I will be happy to answer any questions.

W. Dustin Boatwright, P.E., M ASCE  
The Little River Drainage District  
Executive Vice President/Chief Engineer