

ADDRESS TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

General Wehr, Col. Anderson, distinguished Members of the Commission, Corps people and ladies and gentlemen aboard the Motor vessel, Mississippi:

I am William Keiser, an attorney from Ridgely, Lake County, Tennessee, and a member of the Lake County Levee and Drainage Board. It is an honor to be here and a privilege to address you.

Every time I attend one of these meetings, I get to see American democracy in action: ordinary people like me, speaking freely to our chosen leaders and making known our opinions, needs, wants and desires. This is something to be respected, cherished and protected.

It is a cruel irony that most of the time, flood events victimize those who are least financially able to cope with the devastation-The rich folks build their houses on the high ground, and the poor build on what's left, i.e., low ground. Such has been the case in northwest Tiptonville for many years. Through the efforts of the Corps of Engineers and the late Jerome Shumate, the Tiptonville Levee Extension was built some years ago. This gave much needed protection from the floodwaters of the Mississippi, but impounded water still flooded the area.

Now, thanks to the efforts of the Memphis District of the Corps of Engineers, and Mr. David Salyers of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority, the impounded water threat will become a thing of the past. Lake County has been awarded a \$3.3 million HUD Disaster Resilience Grant to construct a pumping station on the Tiptonville Levee Extension. Construction is expected to begin this summer. Thanks to all who took part in this endeavor.

Once again, our twenty-two floodgates are a concern. On the afternoon of December 29, 2015, after a major rain event, facing a 4-5 foot rise on the Mississippi at Tiptonville, we began lowering the floodgates. Please understand that we wait as long as possible to lower the gates to allow as much rain water to drain out as possible. With the interior water and Mississippi water at equilibrium, we found that three gates would not lower. Frantic telephone calls to our friends at the Corps brought a machinist and two helpers to the scene within three hours. In the cold dark of night, two gates were made to lower, but the third, at Harris Ditch could not be made to function. With the river water running in, the decision was made to cut

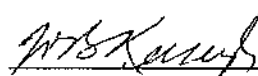
the 3 inch threaded stainless steel stem and drop the gate. Once again, thanks to the Corps, Lake County was saved from flooding.

Now, however, we are faced with one of the three Harris Ditch gates being inoperative and closed. Further, two of the four gates at Blue Bank Bayou are inoperative and closed: one gear assembly has been at Ensley for repairs for over a year, and the other has recently developed a gear problem.

Clearly, the floodgates are essential for the survival of Lake County, and especially in crop-growing season. We would greatly appreciate any help you can give us to get the three inoperative gates back in service.

Our final area of concern is, strangely enough, on the west side of the Mississippi; i.e., the peninsula on the outside of Little Prairie Bend, mile 850, commonly known as Coal Barge Island, that forms the east side of the Port of Caruthersville. Severe erosion, scouring, and bank caving is taking place between the two dikes on the south end. Much land has already been lost, and if the erosion is allowed to continue, the Port of Caruthersville will no longer be a slack water port. We would greatly appreciate your attention to this matter.

Again, we thank you for services and aid, past and present; and look forward to a continuing relationship in the future years.



WILLIAM B. KEISER, JR.

4/11/16