

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 1, 2010

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-128 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-146A Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Senator Cochran:

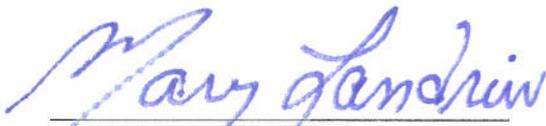
We represent states that are directly and economically dependent upon a properly maintained and reliable Mississippi River channel for deep draft navigation. However, we now understand that the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has unilaterally announced, without consultation with affected maritime and shipping interests, that it will not dedicate sufficient maintenance resources to meet immediate Mississippi River dredging needs through Fiscal Year 2011, contrary to decades of such agency practices. We are very concerned about this action by the Corps, and the Congress must work to fully fund appropriate maintenance and operation measures to address U.S. export and other shipping demands.

Without a dependable Mississippi River channel for deep draft navigation, a wide range of products and goods from our states will be placed at an immediate competitive disadvantage for participation in the Nation's export markets. This reduction in maritime transport capability will further stress the economic viability of our agricultural, manufacturing, construction, natural resource, and other domestic businesses.

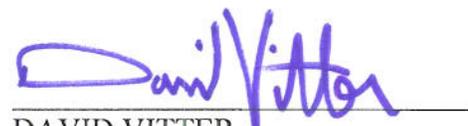
Congressional funding action must be provided, hopefully during the current "lame duck" session, to fully maintain the Mississippi River deep draft channel. Failure to do so will significantly harm the many businesses that depend upon that vital waterway and threaten thousands of jobs created by those businesses. Additionally, in the longer term, we must direct the Corps to work closely with the Congress to ensure that more realistic Federal budgeting is provided for the proper, predictable and dependable maintenance and operation of the Mississippi River deep draft channel.

Thank you for your attention to this matter of importance to our Nation.

Sincerely,



MARY L. LANDRIEU
United States Senator



DAVID VITTER
United States Senator