July 8, 2013

The Honorable Roy D. Blunt
The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators McCaskill and Blunt:

We are pleased to follow up on our March 15 meeting and on subsequent discussions with your staff regarding the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to develop its draft environmental-impact statement for the project and is working to address the comments that both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offered on that draft. The integration of those federal agency comments and responses into the draft environmental-impact statement is nearing completion.

The Corps' Division Commander briefed the EPA's Region 7 in Kansas City on June 12, 2013, and the FWS's Midwest Region in St. Paul on June 19, 2013, on the Corps' proposed responses to the agencies' comments. Those briefings clarified many issues, including establishing a common understanding by the EPA and the Corps about the wetland acres affected. Both the EPA and the FWS assured the Army and the Corps that the revised draft environmental-impact statement will receive an expedited review once it is completed and released to the agencies. Pending any additional agency comments, the revised draft environmental-impact statement is expected to be released for public review later this month.

We will continue to provide biweekly updates for your staff. In the meantime, please accept our thanks for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Bob Perciasepe
Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

Daniel M. Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service