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MISSISSIPPI RIVER DEVELOPMENT

Question

Do you support such Mississippi River development projects as the replacement of the Alton Lock and Dam 26 on the Mississippi? (This project is favored by business interests but opposed by environmentalists and the railroads, which feel it will give river transportation a competitive price advantage).

Answer

I am aware of the need for repair of the Lock and Dam, and I am told that the size of the present Lock creates a traffic bottleneck. I am also aware that any project of this type does have the potential of adverse environmental impact.

At the present time, the Secretary of the Army is preparing a detailed study of the project, along with an expanded Environmental Impact Statement, and will shortly make his recommendations to the Congress for their action.

I am confident that the Secretary's recommendation will give proper attention to the environmental effects of the project as well as to the economic considerations involved.

Background

The question of the replacement of the Alton Lock and Dam 26 is a very important one. The present facility needs major repairs, and the Lock is too small for existing river traffic as well as for projected requirements.

Under 1909 legislation, the Secretary of the Army authorized a replacement and enlargement project. In a court suit brought by environmental and railroad interests, an injunction was obtained and the judge raised two major points: