



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION
P.O. BOX 80
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39181-0080

Executive Office

15 JAN 2019

Ms. Kirsten Wallace
Executive Director
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
415 Hamm Building
408 St. Peter Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear Ms. Wallace:

Thank you for your letter dated November 16, 2018, requesting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to allow deviations within the authorized operating band to water control manuals for the Upper Mississippi River System locks and dams for pools 9, 10, 12, 13, 18, and the entire length of the Illinois Waterway. Your letter also requested that we secure Fiscal Year 2019 work plan money to develop an overarching master water control plan as a long term solution for incorporating environmental principals in the management of the 9-foot navigation channel.

With respect to deviation requests, the Mississippi Valley Division will evaluate and respond to deviation requests through the districts in accordance with existing authority and policy. It is important to note that a deviation would only be a temporary solution. The most effective and prudent way to incorporate appropriate environmental principles is an update to the water control plan for each individual project. This process ensures the proper benefit for ecosystem restoration while maintaining a safe and reliable 9-foot channel. Individual project water control plans are the backbone of operating our projects and, therefore, are the appropriate place to incorporate appropriate changes in operations.

Your letter referenced a recent proposal for Pool 13 under the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) authority for pool-scale drawdown. UMRR remains a viable option to address your interests in attaining environmental benefits within the proposed navigation pools only if that feature is part of the formulated restoration project. However, the UMRR authority would not extend to the review or development of water control plans. The Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program is a long-term program of navigation improvements and ecological restoration for the Upper Mississippi River System and, if funded, would allow for further analysis of authorized ecosystem restoration measures.

I appreciate our collaboration with you and UMRBA and look forward to our continued efforts in advancing integrated solutions for the upper Mississippi River. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Mr. Brian Chewing at (601) 634-5836 or brian.chewning@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard G. Kaiser".

Richard G. Kaiser
Major General, U.S. Army
Commander