

MINUTES

SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, TECHNOLOGY & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

October 22, 2010

The Senate Interim Committee on Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs, and the House Interim Committee on Public Transportation, met jointly at 9:00 a.m. Friday, October 22, 2010, at the Rick Evans Grandview Prairie Conservation Education Center, 1685 CR 36N, in Columbus, Arkansas.

Committee members in attendance: Senator Larry Teague; Representatives Monty Davenport, Garry Smith, and Randy Stewart.

Other members in attendance: Senators Shane Broadway, Gene Jeffress, and Jimmy Jeffress; Representative David "Bubba" Powers.

Representative Davenport called the meeting to order.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chris Thomason, Chancellor, University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, welcomed committee members and guests to the meeting.

Congressman Mike Ross thanked everyone for coming and commended the Arkansas Red River Commission for its work.

BRIEFING ON THE RED RIVER NAVIGATION SYSTEM (HANDOUTS 1-3)

Bob Tullos, Executive Director, Arkansas Red River Commission, Texarkana, Arkansas, presented a report on the *Arkansas Red River Commission SW Arkansas Navigation Study*. Mr. Tullos stated the primary goal of the Commission is to make improvements to the Red River in Arkansas, which includes extending navigation from Shreveport, Louisiana to the Index Bridge, located north of Texarkana. One barge can carry 1,500 tons for 14 miles on one unit of fuel, while it would take 15 jumbo rail cars to carry the same tonnage for 1.1 miles, and 58 large semi-trucks for 4.6 miles. The cost per ton-mile for a barge is approximately 1/3 of the cost compared to rail and 1/5 compared to trucking. A barge can carry one ton of cargo 514 miles per gallon compared to 202 miles by train and 59 miles by truck. During the times when local farmers need water the most, the river is at its lowest level, and the river north of Shreveport is unsuitable for commercial navigation because of low water levels during most of the year. Alternative plans under investigation include a 2-lock and dam plan to Garland, a 3-lock and dam plan to Fulton, a 2-lock and dam plan to Fulton, and a 3-lock and dam plan to Index. Due to the few additional benefits gained from extending navigation from Fulton to Index, the Commission is not evaluating the Index alternative to the same level of detail as the other alternatives. Future plans include:

- completing the Southwest Arkansas Navigation Project making the Red River navigable from Shreveport to Index
- support letters for extending the "reach" of the Red River to the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area
- action with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by the U.S. Senatorial and Congressional Delegations from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana to secure funding
- implement feasibility and environmental studies
- secure appropriations to make the Red River navigable all the way to the DFW area

Upon questioning by Representative Davenport regarding feasibility and environmental studies, Mr. Tullos stated the studies have been completed and the Commission did not received any complaints.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.