Atchafalaya Basin Recreation Area
May 21, 1971
Lafayette, La.

Public Forum
Daily Advertiser
Governor John J. McKeithen
State of Louisiana
State Capitol Building
Baton Rouge, La. 70804

Dear Governor McKeithen:

The members of our local bass fishing club wish to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge your interest and efforts towards the creation of a National Recreation Area within the Atchafalaya Basin. We sincerely appreciate your assistance.

As sport fishermen, we are very much interested in the realization of this National Recreation Area proposal. Because of the Basin's uniqueness, its recreation potential, and its productivity of many natural resources, the creation of the Atchafalaya Basin National Recreation Area, as currently proposed, will preserve the area for future generations and continue to serve as a multiple use facility for sport and commercial fishing, hunting, mineral and lumber interests, tourism, and nature appreciation in an ecological system based upon seasonal water overflow.

Currently, the continued use of the Basin by bass fishermen, as well as other sport fishermen, commercial fishing and crawfishing interests, is being threatened. Certain man-made changes have had the effect of deteriorating the Basin by silting and channelization which interrupts natural waterflow. In addition, many private hunting clubs are leasing large portions of the Basin for the private use of their members. Whereas formerly landowners allowed access for public fishing and hunting, these private clubs, as lessees, in several instances have non-member sport and commercial fishermen access to fishing areas formerly used for public fishing. As additional private clubs are formed, it is very likely that the use of additional fishing areas will be denied to the general public resulting in only those individuals with higher incomes who are financially able to join these private clubs to gain access for fishing or hunting purposes. A public recreation area would again afford uninhibited access to the fishing areas of the Basin for sportsmen and commercial fishermen of all income levels.

The members of our bass club urge your continued support of a multiple use National Recreation Area as is currently being proposed for the Atchafalaya Basin.

Sincerely yours,
Signed: Jerry L. Hayes
President