



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160

Mr. Williams

IN REPLY REFER TO

LMNED-HT

29 October 1965

SUBJECT: PMH Protection for Lake Pontchartrain, La. and Vicinity

TO: Division Engineer
Lower Mississippi Valley
ATTN: LMVED

1. Reference is made to the Interim Survey Report, Lake Pontchartrain, La. and Vicinity, dated 21 November 1962.

2. During the recent hurricane "Betsy", extremely high wind tides overtopped existing levees in areas for which hurricane protection projects were recommended in the Lake Pontchartrain report. This overtopping was responsible for the loss of about 70 lives and it caused widespread flooding and extensive damage in residential areas. The protective system recommended in the report was designed to provide protection from an occurrence of the SPH (standard project hurricane). If the protective system had been constructed as recommended, overtopping of the levees during "Betsy" would have been minor. However, areas southeast of New Orleans on the east side of the Mississippi River experienced wind tides greater than those expected to accompany a SPH. Therefore, had "Betsy" been on a track more critical to the Lake Pontchartrain area, wind tides greater than those used for design purposes would probably have resulted. This means that a future hurricane similar in intensity to hurricane "Betsy" and on a track critical to the Lake Pontchartrain area would cause overtopping of the proposed SPH protection.

3. Assuming the possibility that "Betsy" may have been of lower frequency than the SPH, it is considered that a degree of protection greater than that recommended in the report should be provided. The modification would be made during the detailed planning stage. PMH protection would have ample justification even though the benefit to cost ratio would be lower.

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4. Accordingly, it is requested that authority be granted to modify the recommended plan of protection to provide PMH (probable maximum hurricane) protection.


THOMAS J. BOWEN
Colonel, CE
District Engineer