DAEN-CWP-C (LMNPD-F, 8 Aug 84) 2nd End
SUBJECT: Lake Pontchartrain, Louisiana, and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project

HQ, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. 20314-1000 7 FEB 1985

TO: Commander, Lower Mississippi Valley Division

1. I have reviewed the revised Post Authorization Change (PAC) Notification Report, the Reevaluation Report and Final Supplement I to the Environmental Impact Statement. I find that the High Level Plan will provide the New Orleans area the authorized standard project hurricane level of protection at a total project cost of about $103 million less than the Barrier Plan. Savings in remaining costs would be about $146 million. Remaining benefits of the High Level Plan are about 10% greater than those of the Barrier Plan. Implementation of the High Level Plan will avoid the adverse environmental impacts of construction of the barriers and is environmentally superior to the authorized Barrier Plan. Mitigation concepts are included in the Reevaluation Report and development of a specific mitigation plan is scheduled for completion in 1985. There are no basic differences in the local cooperation requirements of either plan. Therefore, I concur with the recommendations of the New Orleans District and Lower Mississippi Valley Division Commanders and approve the PAC.

2. The Final Supplement I to the Environmental Impact Statement was filed with EPA on 29 November 1984, and given notice in the Federal Register on 7 December 1984. The 30 day administrative review period has expired, and I have reviewed the comments received and have signed the Record of Decision adopting the High Level Plan.

3. Approval authority for the reevaluation report is delegated in accordance with ER 1105-2-10, paragraph 1-5a(3).

4. Development and finalization of a specific mitigation plan should proceed expeditiously.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

JOHN F. WALL
Major General, USA
Director of Civil Works

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CF:
New Orleans Dist.

# RECORD OF DECISION

## Lake Pontchartrain, Louisiana, and Vicinity, Hurricane Protection Project

I have reviewed recommendations by the New Orleans District and Lower Mississippi Valley Division Engineers for modifications to the authorized plan to reduce flood damages from hurricane-induced storm surges in the portion of the New Orleans area located generally between Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne and the Mississippi River. The modified (High Level) Plan recommended includes:

- o improving the existing hurricane protection levee system in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes,

- o improving existing levees and constructing new ones in St. Bernard Parish,

- o repairing and rehabilitating the Mandeville Seawall in St. Tammany Parish,

- o building a new mainline hurricane levee on the east bank of St. Charles Parish just north of U.S. Highway 61 (Airline Highway),

- o and raising and strenthening the existing levee which extends along the Jefferson-St. Charles Parish boundary between Lake Pontchartrain and Airline Highway.

Following review of the views of interested agencies and the concerned public, I find the plan to be economically justified and in the public interest.

In addition to a "No Action" alternative and the original authorized (Barrier) plan, various structural and nonstructural plans were considered and are described in the Corps of Engineers final report. Nonstructural measures such as flood-forecasting, combined with evacuation; and the National Flood Insurance Program are currently employed in the study area and will continue to be employed with or without Federal action. There are no other practicable non-structural measures for improving hurricane protection to the study area. The recommended High Level Plan would provide standard project hurricane level of protection, is the environmentally preferable plan, and provides greater net national economic development benefits.

Technical, economic, and environmental criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's Principles and Guidelines. I considered applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local governmental plans in evaluating the alternatives. I found the benefits to be gained with construction of the recommended project to outweigh any adverse effects. Various approaches to project construction and levee alignment that would avoid or minimize environmental harm resulting from the selected alternative were considered; and a study is underway to complete development of an appropriate mitigation plan which will compensate for significant fish and wildlife losses caused by the recommended plan, thus insuring that all practicable means to minimize environmental harm will be implemented. As the development of mitigation measures would have no effect on the plan formulation and because of the need to proceed with the construction of hurricane protection measures in the New Orleans area, I have processed the EIS for the modified plan prior to the completion of the mitigation plan. Based on my review of these evaluations, I hereby approve the High Level Plan.

7 FEB 1985

Date

JOHN F. WALL
Major General, USA
Director of Civil Works