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July 19, 1976

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Colonel L. A. Hubert, Jr.  
Acting District Engineer  
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers  
P. O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160

RE: Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Plan

Dear Colonel Hubert,

After receiving a copy of your May 19 letter to Mayor Landrieu in which you responded to his request to consider the acquisition of those remaining unleveed and undeveloped wetlands in Orleans Parish, my office undertook the gathering of additional information. I am forwarding our findings to you in the belief that it may aid your staff in evaluating the Mayor's proposal.

First, I would like to state that we view the wetland acquisition as performing two functions: the acquisition would function as a non-structural alternative to the provision of flood control works which would be inevitable should the area become further developed; and the acquisition would also serve as a mitigation measure, as the Mayor suggested in his April 14 letter, to offset adverse impacts associated with the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Plan.

In order to determine the environmental costs of the Hurricane Protection Project in economic terms, we asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to estimate the amount of environmental damage which could be expected to be attributable to the Hurricane Protection Project. A copy of our request and the Fish and Wildlife Service's reply are attached.

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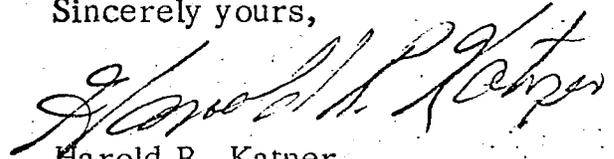
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It was estimated that an economic loss of \$218,706 annually would result from the project. Assuming that the project would have a 100 year life, that loss comes to a total of \$21,870,600 (realizing that the St. Charles Parish portion has been indefinitely deferred, losses due to that portion were deleted from our computations). Considering losses due only to the Orleans Parish portions of the Hurricane Protection Project, it was estimated that annual losses of \$79,653 would occur, or a total of \$7,965,300 in losses would be expected over the 100 year life of the project.

We have estimated that the wetlands in question could be acquired for under \$20 million. When the cost of providing future protection works along the shores of Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne is considered either alone or in combination with the costs of environmental losses due to the Hurricane Protection Project, I believe that the subject acquisition becomes a very inexpensive alternative and should be seen as highly desirable.

I hope you find the attached response from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife service helpful to you and your staff in evaluating the acquisition proposal. If I can be of any assistance please let me know.

Sincerely yours,



Harold R. Katner  
Director-Secretary

HRK/amg  
attachments