

The Board of Levee Commissioners

OF THE

Orleans Levee District

SUITE 202 — ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
NEW ORLEANS LAKEFRONT AIRPORT

New Orleans, La.

70126

November 20, 1980

PROTECTING YOU
AND YOUR FAMILY

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Colonel Thomas A. Sands
District Engineer
Department of the Army
New Orleans District
Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160

Dear Colonel Sands:

On September 24, 1980, Orleans Levee Board staff members attended a briefing on the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project. During the course of the day ample evidence seemed to be surfacing regarding the ability at this time to make a decision regarding the barriers. The numbers postulated by your staff apparently make a case for the high level plan; i.e., a) optimal barrier plan - \$445,089,000 to \$552,465,000; b) optimal high level plan - \$416,000,000.

The latest official time we have been given for the EIS completion is December of 1982, however we understand it could slip at least a year. This means not only 24 to 36 months of cost escalation for whatever project is finally approved and constructed, but 24 to 36 more months of environmental studies needed to complete an already staggering EIS cost in which we have a share.

As the assuring agency for Orleans Parish, the president of a Board having a responsibility to the local taxpayers and also a taxpayer I urge you to seek a speedy conclusion to what appears to be an impasse in deliberations concerning the ultimate fate of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project.

We are now fifteen years past Betsy and while we can point to many improvements in the flood protection system, it is inconceivable to me that we still don't know what the final product will look like. I know there are many reasons for this but I might add that we are three years past Judge Schwartz' decision with what looks like another three years before we'll know.

More importantly than the soaring costs of both the project and EIS is the fact that many individual projects hinging on the outcome of the EIS are not being done and the ultimate protection the project is supposed to afford the taxpayer is pushed further and further away.

It is getting difficult to explain to the concerned citizen why it takes so long to come to an answer and how this translates into delayed protection.

The National Weather Service just unveiled the results of their SLOSH (Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes) model forecast. The results are frightening to say the least. I don't feel protection should wait. We must get on with a plan of action. It is my feeling that if there is the possibility that the answer in three (3) years would be the same as one that could be issued today, it makes no sense to proliferate the cost of the project and the EIS under those conditions. I sincerely hope that the gravity of the situation will provide the impetus for a concentrated effort to reach a decision now if that is possible.

As in the past feel free to call on me for any support needed or assistance in the resolution of any problems in connection with the project.

Yours very truly,


Guy F. LeMieux
President

GFL:gmb

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