

LETTERS OF COMMENT RECEIVED ON THE IHNC LOCK REPORT

Officials

[State]

- 1 Secretary Frank Denton, LADOTD (on behalf of Governor Foster)
- 2 Dean, SEN Lynn (statement handed in at public meeting)
- 3 Odinet, REP Kenneth L., Sr.

[Local]

- 4 Di Fatta, Joseph S., Jr. (St. Bernard Parish Councilman, District C)
- 5 Hazeur-Distance, Ellen (New Orleans City Councilperson, District E)
- 6 Ponstein, Charles (St. Bernard Parish President)

Agencies

[Federal]

- 7 EPA Region 6
- 8 US Coast Guard
- 9 US Department of Agriculture
- 10 US Dept of Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
- 11 US Dept of Interior
- 12 US Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration)

[State]

- 13 Governor's Task Force on Maritime Industry
- 14 Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- 15 Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

[Local]

- 16 New Orleans International Airport
- 17 New Orleans Public Schools

Organizations

- 18 American Waterway Operators
- 19 Chamber of Commerce (New Orleans and the River Region)
- 20 Christmas in October (A Preservation Resource Center Program)
- 21 Consulting Engineers Council of Louisiana
- 22 Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association, Inc.
- 23 Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association
- 24 Holy Cross Board
- 25 Holy Cross Community Development Corporation
- 25a Holy Cross Neighborhood Association
- 26b Holy Cross Neighborhood Association
- 27 Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation
- 28 New Orleans Board of Trade
- 29 New Orleans Steamship Association
- 30 Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans
- 31 St. Bernard Wetlands Foundation
- 32 Tulane Environmental Law Clinic (representing the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, LA Environmental Action network, and the Sierra Club - New Orleans Group)
- 33 World Trade Center

Businesses

- 34 Canal Barge Company, Inc.
- 35 Capitol Marine Supply Inc.
- 36 Chaffe, McCall, Phillips, Tolar, & Sarpy
- 37 Colle Towing Co., Inc.

Businesses (continued)

38 Gulf South Marine Transportation, Inc.
39 H. C. Freight Systems
40 Higman Barge Lines
41 Hollywood Marine, Inc.
42 Holnam, Inc.
43 Holy Cross School
44 IMC Consulting Engineers
45 Jones, Walker, Poitevent, Carrere & Denegre
46 Lafarge Corporation
47 Magnolia Marine Transport
48 Mark's Muffler Shop
49 Maryland Marine, Inc.
50 McDonough Marine Service
51 Milling, Benson, Woodward, Hillyer, Pierson & Miller
52 National Marine
53 Navios Ship Agencies, Inc.
54 Waldemar S. Nelson and Company
55 Sizeler Architects
56 Stolt Transportation Services, Inc.
57 Tidewater, Inc.
58 Vulcan/ICA

Individuals

59 Allen, Gary R.
60 Blaise, Elizabeth
61 Bruch, CAPT Dean (Statement handed in at the public meeting)
62 Budd, Edward P.
63 Cady, Francis F., Jr
64 Christiansen, CAPT Ejnar
65 Cooper, Marc (Statement handed in at the public meeting)
66 Cummings, Eugene
67 Dashiell, Pam
68 Duracher, Louis and Sally
69 Ernst, Laurentine
70 Hanzo, Albert
71 Heine, Edwin A.
72 Hobson, Neal
73 Hogan, Mary Clare
74 Koeferl, John
75 Kraus, Kathleen
76 Leonard, David
77 Michon, Linda
78 Munster, Cynthia
79 Muse, Kathy
80 Ohlsen, M. Thomas and Patricia
81 Ohlsen, Troy and Denise
82 Ponstein, Henry P.
83 Quintini, David
84 Quintini, Mr. & Mrs. Frank
85 Rubin, Billy and Denise
86 Story, Mary
87 Williams, Marietta
88 Wilson, Shelby
89 Leblanc (?) & family



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
P. O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-94245



M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

FRANK M. DENTON
SECRETARY

February 28, 1997

Colonel William Conner
District Engineer
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Conner:

This is in response to your recent request for comments on the proposed Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting Channels (Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock Replacement) project.

We believe that improvements to our navigation system are of great benefit and importance to the citizens of Louisiana. In order to continue to compete in the global market, we must ensure that components of our navigation system are in good working order and are able to meet current and future demands.

Comments noted.

The existing lock structure has been in operation since 1923 and is in need of major rehabilitation to continue its current level of service. Additionally, it is too small to handle the existing vessel traffic. Significant delays have been experienced due to the structure's inadequate size and the three bridges crossing the canal further compound the problem as navigation is closed during peak vehicular traffic hours. A new lock of adequate size is now necessary to handle current and future navigation demands. The Corps of Engineers' proposal to construct a float-in, deep draft lock structure as well as bridge modifications has a positive benefit/cost ratio and is vital in upgrading Louisiana's intermodal capability.

On behalf of Governor Murphy J. Foster, Jr., the State of Louisiana is in full support of the lock structure replacement in the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal as now proposed.

Sincerely,

Frank M. Denton
Secretary

cc: Governor M. J. "Mike" Foster

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ON INDUSTRIAL CANAL

LOCK CHANGES - PEOPLES' RIGHTS - NINTH WARD

ALL GREATER NEW ORLEANS - ST.BERNARD PARISH & AMERICA

Meet of us do not want change; yet the only way to improve our society is by meaningful change.

1/10/07 a/l

Many citizens of St.Bernard do not want a canal(s cut, if you will) in St. Bernard parish.

We remember the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) - that nasty eroding cut that daily proves it was a mistake.

St. Bernard citizens were promised industry with good paying jobs for our citizens and our children. Today over thirty years later not one industry is on the MRGO - not one job came from the MRGO - but we had to build an expensive levee to provide us protection from hurricane flooding. The MRGO still harms our parish where the levee was never built at Reggio, Florissant, Yatcakey and Hopedale. Sometimes, school buses cannot pick up children due to flood waters caused by the MRGO. The taxpayers of our parish have paid over FOUR MILLION DOLLARS and still owe nearly SEVEN MILLION DOLLARS to the federal government , if it is not forgiven.

So St.Bernard does not want another cut. Neither does St.Bernard want eleven years of delay caused by construction on three bridges at St.Claude, Claiborne Avenue and Florida Avenue, with the final result that we will still have to stop for raised bridges when ships and equipment goes through.

Yet if we want progress - and the jobs and a better living which comes with it - some changes must be made.

History records that in 1825 the Erie Canal in New York State was the first canal

Please refer to Senator Dean's comments at the public meeting.

built in the United States and it made New York state all the greater, helping develop the economy all the way to the Great Lakes. It was so successful it was made wider and deeper several times.

One of the greatest engineering feats of all time was done by the United States when it built the Panama Canal, a canal "cut" on a continental scale, as it cut North and South America in two but made a better world for all, including the United States as well as the people of Panama. *The Second Canal Said off the Suez Canal, etc.*

The United States built the Gulf Intracoastal waterway which extends from Brownsville, Texas to New Orleans to St. Marks, Florida. That canal system carries several times more freight than anyone ever imagined before its building. It has proved a great advantage to the economy of the United States and particularly has benefitted the economies of the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. It has helped our nation's economy grow and has furnished thousands of good jobs to our people.

So - if done right we can benefit from new canals. We need more and bigger locks and waterways to handle the increased traffic and larger barges and ships which in turn employs more people and reduces the price of goods you buy at the store.

As a state senator, as an industrialist, as a consumer and as an American I realize the good changes which should be made.

FIRST - let us consider truly the proposed changes on the Industrial Canal locks is a poor bandaid for a massive problem. That problem is the delay all citizens in the Ninth Ward of Orleans Parish and St. Bernard have to endure when waiting on bridges to go up.

That problem is reflected in the cost we as motorists bear in wasted time or in wasted gasoline spent idling in line; the cost of wasted time for tow boats and ships waiting for locks to open and close, and for bridges to raise and lower. We all share those costs in the

way of higher prices for our power, manufactured goods and food, and yes, the loss of our valuable time spent in waiting!

We need a solution that eliminates all these costs if possible and it is possible! For instance:

- (1) let us raise the St.Claude bridge to the height of the Claiborne bridge and likewise raise the new Florida Avenue bridge to the height of the Claiborne bridge.
- (2) Then weld all three bridges shut so they never open to bother automotive traffic ever again. At the same time we build a canal that taller ships can pass through - so we
- (3) Design a new canal with high-rise, never-to-open bridges in place before we start digging the canal so that traffic will NEVER be held up, not one minute, during construction and thereafter.
Automotive
- (4) Before the canal is dug build the lock gates so designed as to carry two-way traffic on either lock gate, so that if one gate is open the traffic can go over the other gate, and when it is in turn open, the traffic can go over the other gate. (This means never will both gates open at the same time which helps highway traffic.)

When all is done then and only then will we dig the canal or the cut, if you will.

Of course you must have two levees which will prevent a rising river or a hurricane from harming the people. These levees must be far enough apart that fabricating plants and other businesses needing deep water transport can locate on each side so we can have the good paying jobs for our citizens without harm to the environment. To mitigate the anxiety and improve the looks of the area we could use this area also to build some nice parks and such for the benefit of the people.

And most important is when that cut - canal is made, if it is made in St. Bernard Parish the money will have been set aside to close off and dam up the MRGO forever,

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starting at its mouth in Breton Sound. Then we must close off and dam up permanently both sides of old Bayou LaLoutre so it will flow like it did 50 years ago. Then we must close off and dam up permanently both sides of Bayou Yscloskey so it will flow as it did before MRGO. When we dam the east side of Bayou Yscloskey we must restore all the power lines, telephone lines, waterlines and gas lines, and restore the old road which once ran to Lake Borgne. We must seal off MRGO near the new canal you may build.

When finished we will have three or four long, narrow lakes, and we will no longer have a salt water tide flowing in and out and eroding away our land.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would support such construction only if all the financing is arranged so that it is all completed to eliminate the dangers to our citizens, to stop the waste of their time and stop the economic waste to our economy of a canal that frustrates all of us - some on a daily basis.

I also will rigorously oppose a new industrial canal lock that will destroy the Galvez Street dock. We should sell this dock to the highest bidder so we will have environmentally safe businesses to operate from so we can furnish good jobs to our economy.

I would be glad to answer any questions





STATE OF LOUISIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

KENNETH L. ODINET, SR.
DISTRICT 103

February 26, 1997

Colonel William Connor
Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160

RE: Industrial Canal Lock Replacement

Dear Colonel Connor:

I have reviewed the Army Corps of Engineers' proposal to replace the Industrial Canal locks and would like at this time to express my endorsement of the project.

I feel the overall project would be an asset to all concerned. However, residents of St. Bernard Parish have expressed a legitimate concern regarding traffic flow during construction. Because St. Claude Avenue and Claiborne Avenue are the main arteries in and out of St. Bernard Parish the safety and traffic concerns of St. Bernard Parish residents should be seriously addressed.

Constituents and I both agree that the temporary bridges recently added to your project at those locations will relieve the situation somewhat; however, all would like to see the lock project incorporate the high level Florida Bridge as a permanent solution to the age-old problem. All would like to see this project address the Florida Expressway from Interstate to LA 47 as an intermodal and evacuation route for lower Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes.

We trust that the foregoing will meet with your approval to be entered in the minutes of record. Should any additional information be required, please advise.

Sincerely,

Kenneth L. Odinet, Sr.

KLO/mh
cc: Walter Boasso, St. Bernard Chamber, Transportation Comm.
Charles Ponstein, Chairman, Regional Planning Commission

Please refer to Representative Odinet's comments at the public meeting.



St. Bernard Parish Government

8201 West Judge Perez Drive • Chalmette, LA 70043
(504) 278-4200 • Fax (504) 271-7343

February 25, 1997

Honorable Gerald Di Charry
US Army Corp of Engineers
New Orleans District
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Dear Honorable Di Charry:

In recent meetings and discussions held on the proposed plan for the replacement of the Inner Harbor Industrial Canal Locks the primary concern of my constituents and myself is the daily ingress and egress to St. Bernard Parish during construction which could take as long as ten years to complete.

As indicated by Mr. Di Charry of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, mitigation funds for the entire project is thirty three million dollars. I personally feel that this would not be sufficient funding for Orleans, St. Bernard and any other parishes that would be affected by the ten to fifteen year improvement project. I am soliciting your support to increase the mitigation funding to a more realistic figure. In that solicitation of additional mitigation funding I would hope that you would consider a dedication of those funds to a project that is of the utmost interest of all citizens of St. Bernard Parish, namely the Florida Avenue High Rise Bridge and Florida Avenue Expressway. As I am very much aware this is now a state project and I feel that your consideration of this project is warranted. Residents of St. Bernard Parish have for many years been promised this high rise bridge which would facilitate ingress and egress of St. Bernard working residents from St. Bernard to the surrounding metropolitan areas.

This high rise and expressway would also give us an added evacuation route in the event of a tidal surge and or hurricane.

I personally feel the Inter Harbor Navigational Canal Lock project is a valuable and viable project for the greater New Orleans area and I also feel that the future of the maritime industry hinges on the future of this project, but, my immediate concern is to the residents of St. Bernard Parish and the effects of the project on our parish.

If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact this office at 278-4228.

Yours truly,

Joseph S. Di Fatta, Jr.
Councilman, District C



The Council

ELLEN HAZEUR-DISTANCE
COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT E

City of New Orleans

CITY HALL, SUITE 2W60
1300 PERDIDO STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70112
(504) 565-6305

February 28, 1997

William L. Conner,
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Engineer
Department Of The Army
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

VIA FAX & MAIL

Dear Colonel Conner:

As you know from my comments made in both public and private meetings, I am opposed to the Industrial Canal Lock Project. Please note my position for your records.

Comments noted.

Sincerely,

Ellen Hazeur-Distance
Councilmember, District E

RECORDED 32' 140A

EHD/bb

St. Bernard Parish Government

8201 West Judge Perez Drive • Chalmette, Louisiana 70043
(504) 278-4200 • Fax (504) 278-4135

January 27, 1997

Colonel William L. Conner,
District Engineer
U.S. Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160

Dear Colonel Conner:

As President for the Parish of St. Bernard, I am issuing this statement relative to the proposed lock replacement project for the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal. Please understand that this letter does not speak for the Parish Council as I am sure a formal Resolution will be forthcoming in the near future expressing their concerns.

St. Bernard Parish is located east of the City of New Orleans and has a current population of just over 67,000. Many residents commute to and from the central business district and/or Jefferson Parish each day which requires the crossing of the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal or the Inter Coastal Waterway. The operation of the two existing bridges at St Claude and Claiborne at the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal have been the subject of much controversy in the past and a unified stance has been taken to support the effort for a new bridge crossing at Florida Avenue. The need for an additional bridge crossing became more apparent just last year when the Claiborne bridge was struck by a vessel and put out of service for more than one month which caused substantial delays and restricted emergency medical service vehicles access to medical facilities in the City of New Orleans. This Florida Avenue Bridge project was incorporated into the State's infrastructure improvement plans and engineering design is substantially completed.

I have reviewed the proposed plan with respect to the accommodations to vehicular traffic and am not totally satisfied that the plan fully addresses our concerns. Although the plan includes the new bridge at Florida Avenue, my concern is that the usage of the new Florida Avenue Bridge will cause a tremendous bottle neck at Dr. Meraux Boulevard which is right in the center of one of the most congested areas in St. Bernard today. Our proposed solution to this problem is to extend Florida Avenue to Faris Road (Interstate-510), thus creating an additional link around the eastern side of the City of New Orleans. This would be a better solution not only for St. Bernard Parish residents but for intermodal traffic demands as well by providing an additional means of crossing the Inner Coastal Water Way. I believe this should be a heavily weighed factor when determining the impacts of the lengthy construction process for the lock replacement project on both St. Bernard and the City of New Orleans and given the fact the State of Louisiana is funding the new bridge at Florida Avenue.

Page 1, para. 1. While it is agreed that a new vehicular bridge, mid-rise or high-rise, is needed at Florida Avenue for better traffic flow and improved hurricane evacuation over the Industrial Canal, the Corps does not have the authority under the lock replacement project to include any work at that location. The State of Louisiana has been planning for a new bridge at that location for a number of years. A new bridge has been assumed to be built there in the without project condition.

Linking West Judge Perez Drive and St. Bernard Highway in St. Bernard Parish to the new high-rise vehicular bridge at Florida Avenue (being proposed by the State of Louisiana, Parish of St. Bernard, and the City of New Orleans) with a new permanent roadway through an undeveloped tract in St. Bernard Parish included in the mitigation plan. This will provide a more efficient plan for the dispersion of traffic across the Industrial Canal for the commuter traffic coming from St. Bernard Parish during and after the construction of this project. Also, a more effective hurricane evacuation route plan would be provided with his new roadway. The construction of this new roadway will help reduce traffic congestion in the Lower Ninth Ward area, especially along Caffin Avenue and Tupelo Street. These are major streets within residential areas that would probably be used as detours in lieu of the new roadway in St. Bernard Parish. The amount included in the mitigation plan for this new roadway could be used, at the discretion of the local interests in St. Bernard Parish, for the elevated roadway connection if the both of the following circumstances occur: funds are appropriated by the State of Louisiana or other Federal or non-Federal sources for an elevated roadway along Florida Avenue connecting the new high-rise bridge at Florida Avenue to Parish Road (1510) in St. Bernard Parish, and if this elevated roadway is constructed before the new roadway is built for this project.

Additionally, St. Bernard Parish enjoys considerable business trade with the City of New Orleans and when vehicular traffic is restricted by the construction, we anticipate that a loss in retail sales will result. The vast majority of public services provided in St. Bernard Parish are fully or partially funded through sales taxes; therefore, we would like the Corps of Engineers to address these shortfalls should they be realized. I know of no way to quantify this exposure through the mitigation program prior to construction so I would request that a contingency fund be established should these losses in fact occur.

As Parish President, I support the Lock Replacement Project as I feel it is desperately needed and long overdue. This lock helps facilitate international commerce and serves the United States from Texas throughout the New England states. I am happy to see that the new plan calls for no displacement of residences and provides for improvements within the impacted area through the proposed mitigation program. St. Bernard Parish is a community of hard working citizens who expect to be allowed to commute to and from the greater New Orleans area with minimal delays. This expectation is not unreasonable as most other towns, counties or parishes who are adjacent to a large city require and enjoy similar accommodations.

I stand ready to work with the Corps of Engineers, the State of Louisiana and the City of New Orleans to help facilitate the Lock Replacement Project. Please consider my remarks and do your best to minimize the adverse impacts on St. Bernard Parish and the City of New Orleans.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (504) 274-4227.

Sincerely,


CHARLES PONSTEIN,
PARISH PRESIDENT

Page 2, para 1. As a result of comments received during the public review period a temporary bridge at St. Claude Avenue has been included in the plan. Innovative construction techniques that will require shutdown of the Claiborne Ave. Bridge for only a couple of weeks will also be used. The inclusion of these measures should minimize the loss of retail sales and impacts to business.



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75222-2733

January 17, 1997

R.H. Schroeder, Jr.
Chief, Planning Division
Department of the Army
New Orleans District
Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 602367
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas has completed its review of your agency's Draft Evaluation Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting Channels study for the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The North of Claiborne Avenue plan is the tentatively selected Plan (TSP) of navigational improvement. The plan includes construction of a precast, floated-in, concrete lock 110-foot wide by 1,200-feet long with a depth of 36-feet; replacement of the St. Claude Avenue bridge with a new, low-level, double bascule bridge; replacement of the lift span; and raising the towers on the Claiborne Avenue Bridge; and implementation of selected project mitigation features.

We do not oppose implementation of the TSP. We find the DEIS and the impact assessment to be thorough, comprehensive, and to fully comply with the requirements of NEPA and the CQE Regulations. The broad-based socioeconomic mitigation package presented as part of the plan is commendable. This plan calls for specific actions to minimize and compensate for adverse impacts to the local community that are expected from project construction, mainly in the areas of vehicular traffic, noise, and fire protection, community cohesion, aesthetics and pedestrian access. EPA asks that the mitigation measures described in the DEIS be implemented and given equal consideration in the interest of environmental resource protection, safety, and navigation.

Comments noted.

The EPA rates your DEIS as "LO," i.e., EPA has "Lack of Objections" to the tentatively selected plan of action. Our classification will be published in the Federal Register according to our responsibility under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, to inform the public of our views on proposed Federal actions.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS. We request that you send our office one copy of the Final EIS at the same time that it is sent to the Office of Federal Activities, (2251A), EPA, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20044.

Sincerely yours,
Michael P. Jansky
Michael P. Jansky, P.E.
Regional Environmental Review
Coordinator



U.S. Department
of Transportation
United States
Coast Guard

Commandant (O-SEC)
United States Coast Guard

MAILING ADDRESS:
2100 2nd Street, SW
Washington, DC 20593-0001
(202) 267-1907

11000

JAN 17 99

Mr. R.H. Schroeder,
Chief, Planning Division
Department of the Army
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

We have reviewed the draft evaluation report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting Channels Study, and we have the following comment.

Page 101, paragraph 2, item 3 of the report and page 21, paragraph 4.1.3.8. of the EIS state that, as part of the Corps of Engineers' preferred plan, a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) station housing 50 USCG employees will have to be relocated. The EIS does not specify the cost of relocating the station or who will be responsible for funding the relocation. We would like the EIS to delineate the specific cost of the USCG relocation and state that the Corps of Engineers will fund the relocation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft report and environmental impact statement. If you have any questions on our comments, please contact David Reese of my staff on 202-267-1942.

Sincerely,

Frank L. DeGrace

FRANK L DEGRACE



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

3737 Government Street
Alexandria, Louisiana
71302

January 6, 1997

Mr. R. H. Schroeder, Jr.
Chief, Planning Division
Environmental Analysis Branch
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 6167
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

Re: Evaluation Report/EIS for Mississippi River Gulf Outlet,
New Lock and Connecting Channel

In response to your letter dated December 6, 1996, requesting
our comments on the above, this project will not impact any
work of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Sincerely,

E.J. Giering III, P.E.
State Conservation Engineer

cc: Britt Paul, Water Resources Planning Staff Leader, NRCS,
Alexandria, LA

Comments noted.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive N.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

January 15, 1997

Mr. R. H. Schroeder, Jr., Chief
Planning Division, New Orleans District
Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

The National Marine Fisheries Service has received the Draft Evaluation Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting Channels. The documents, transmitted by your letter of December 6, 1996, address the proposed construction of a new lock and channel improvements for the Inner Harbor Navigation Channel in the vicinity of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Based on our review, we find that the documents adequately address potential alternatives, impacts to living marine resources and their habitats, and mitigation of unavoidable adverse impacts to wetland resources. Accordingly, we have no comments or recommendations to offer.

Thank you for this review opportunity.

Sincerely,

Andreas Mager, Jr.
Assistant Regional Director
Habitat Conservation Division

Comments noted.



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Post Office Box 649
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

January 27, 1997

ER 96/795

District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District (PD-RS)
ATTN: Richard Boe
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Sir:

The U.S. Department of the Interior has reviewed the Draft Evaluation Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting Channels, Louisiana. In this regard, the following comments are provided for your consideration.

General Comments:

The documents are generally well-written and contain adequate descriptions of the proposed alternatives and their impacts. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has provided an October 1996 draft Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) Report for the proposed project. Their recommendations contained in the FWCA Report have also been adequately addressed in the subject documents. We suggest, however, that the final document be revised to include the following specific information.

Specific Comments:

Page 83, paragraph 1 - The section on biological impacts should include a description of the impacts to fish and wildlife resources resulting from construction and operation of the graving site.

Page EIS-34, Table 1 - The section under "Plans 3a through 3f, Flood Protection Systems," should note that construction of the graving site will require a realignment of the hurricane protection levee around that site.

Page D-3-38, paragraph 1 - This paragraph is confusing in that it states "No [additional] steps [to minimize adverse impacts] are planned within the confined disposal site....". The text should clarify to which confined disposal site it refers (i.e., marsh creation site or the MRGO site). At the MRGO site, the FWS recommended that the Corps minimize spoil impacts to existing wetlands within that confined disposal facility (CDF); to accomplish that

Comment 1. The section has been revised to include a description of impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the graving site.

Comment 2. The section has been revised.

Comment 3. The paragraph has been revised.

end, special site selection and confinement measures may be required. On page EIS-105 (6.5.3.), however, the Corps has agreed to work with the FWS to identify areas where disposal impacts would be minimal. This section should, therefore, acknowledge that future detailed site selection and confinement measures may be used to minimize adverse spoil disposal impacts to wetlands in the MRGO CDF.

Thank you for the opportunity to review these documents. We trust these comments will assist you in the development of the final documents.

Sincerely,



Glenn B. Sekavec
Regional Environmental Officer



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
P.O. BOX 3929
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70821-3929

REGION 6

January 23, 1997

IN REPLY REFER TO
Draft Evaluation Report/
Environmental Impact
Statement for the Mississippi
River Gulf Outlet, New Lock
and Connecting Channels
Study

Mr. R. H. Schroeder, Jr.
Chief, Planning Division
Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 610267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

Your December 6, 1996, letter requested comments on the Draft Evaluation Report/EIS by January 27, 1997.

We only received Volume I titled Draft Evaluation Report - Main Report and Environmental Impact Statement.

It is evident that there has been a good deal of work and effort put into the development of the project. The areas that concern this office the most are the funding and handling of traffic during the replacement and modification of the St. Claude Avenue and North Claiborne Avenue Bridges as part of the New Lock construction.

The closure of either bridge will have a significant impact on the traffic flow in an area that is already experiencing congestion. The document relies on the proposed Florida Avenue Expressway as a means of reducing the impact of the Lock project on traffic circulation during construction. Although the State TIME program includes this project, it is our understanding that there presently are not enough funds in the program for implementing the expressway. Even if funds become available for the Florida Avenue Expressway, the development of the project is expected to take substantial time due to the needed coordination, potential controversy and related impacts. If the Lock project relies on the Florida Avenue Expressway as a means of addressing traffic impacts, the status of its development and implementation needs to be closely coordinated with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LA DOTD).

Funding for the proposed mitigation for the traffic impacts needs to be considered as part of the proposed project. That would include the handling of detoured traffic and maintenance of roads

Comments noted.

for redirected traffic, permanent detour roads and, if necessary, temporary bridge crossings of the navigation canal. The document refers to other sources of funding for portions of this work. It should be noted that the availability of State and Federal funding is based upon priorities that are determined by the State DOTD and the New Orleans Regional Planning commission. We encourage continued coordination with these agencies as well as the City of New Orleans to identify availability of appropriate funding for essential parts of the detour routes.

If there are any questions regarding our comments, please contact Mr. William Farr of this office at (504-389-0465) or Mr. Robert Mahoney (504-389-0568).

Sincerely yours,

Walter J. Kudzea
Mr. William A. Bussmann
Division Administrator



State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Governor's Office of Maritime Industry

120 Main Street, Suite 210
St. Peter, Louisiana 70580
(504) 483-0731 FAX (504) 483-5200

M.J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

VIA TELEFAX

February 19, 1997

Colonel William Connor
Commander, New Orleans District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

RE: INDUSTRIAL CANAL LOCK REPLACEMENT

Dear Colonel Connor:

On behalf of the Maritime Industry for the State of Louisiana, I am writing in support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lock Replacement Plan for the Industrial Canal in the Port of New Orleans.

This lock is the busiest lock in the United States and handles over 25 thousand barge tows on an annual basis. These tows carry over 25 million tons of various products to all destinations within the United States. This lock is a vital link in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The present lock restriction causes delays which have a serious financial impact on the maritime industry.

We applaud the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District for their detailed analysis and evaluation of this lock study. The change of the lock to north of Claiborne Avenue and the innovative designs greatly reduce the impact to the neighborhood bordering this lock. In addition, the economic analysis is very positive for the New Orleans area. The planned education and training of a number of area residents will help benefit the local economy. We feel the mitigation plan offers reasonable compensation for those affected by this lock replacement. The

Comments noted.

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Page - 2 -
February 19, 1997

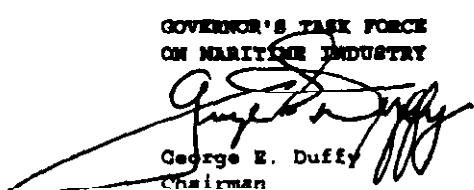
changes in the design minimize the impact to the local neighborhood.

The design changes to the bridge structures at St. Claude and Claiborne Avenue and the potential construction of the Florida Avenue bridge by the City of New Orleans will improve traffic flow, and benefit the area below the lock during hurricane evacuation routings.

The construction of this lock will yield considerable economic benefit to the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana. The maritime industry, both shallow and deep draft, will also benefit. The delays and inconveniences during the construction stages will be minimal when you analyze the overall potential benefits that this replacement plan will yield to the Port of New Orleans. It is based on our careful review of the reports and discussions with the many entities of the maritime industry that we offer our full support, and recommend to the Louisiana congressional delegation that they support the funding required for this lock replacement plan.

Yours very truly,

GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE
ON MARITIME INDUSTRY


George E. Duffy
Chairman



State of Louisiana
Department of Environmental Quality



M.J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

J. DALE GIVENS
SECRETARY

January 24, 1997

R.H. Schroeder, Jr.
Chief, Planning Division
Environmental Analysis Branch
Department of the Army
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

This is in response to the notice and request for comments on the draft evaluation report/Environmental Impact Statement of November 1996, for the Mississippi River - Gulf Outlet New Lock and Connecting Channels project.

The project activity is to take place in the parishes of Orleans and St. Bernard, which are designated by U.S. EPA as ozone attainment parishes operating under a full maintenance plan. The project is subject to the conformity regulations in LAC 33:III, Chapter 14, Subchapters A (general conformity) and B (transportation conformity); and federal conformity regulations at 40 CFR Part 51, Subparts T and W. The Corps is responsible for assessing applicability of the regulations to the project for general conformity, and if necessary, to perform a general conformity determination and provide enforceable mitigation commitments prior to beginning any activity on the project. Activity resulting in on-road mobile emissions must be coordinated with the designated metropolitan planning organization, which is the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission.

DEQ's comments which follow are based on the published draft evaluation report, Volume 1; the Corps' submittals to DEQ-AQD of estimated annual volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from equipment to be used during construction of the project; and conversations with the New Orleans Corps of Engineers environmental staff.

COMMENTS:

- Submitted annual VOC emissions for equipment to be used during construction are estimated by the Corps to be below the 100 ton per year threshold that would require a full conformity determination under the general conformity regulation. Before it can be determined that VOC emissions are below the threshold, estimation of all direct and indirect emissions must be determined.



OFFICE OF AIR QUALITY P O BOX 82135 BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-2135
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

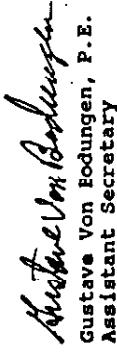


2. It is the department's understanding that mobile emissions from the highway improvement portion of the project are included in state/city transportation plans in compliance with transportation conformity procedures and criteria of LAC 33:III, Chapter 14, Subchapter B and Federal regulations at 40 CFR Part 51, Subpart T. Any mobile VOC emissions resulting directly or indirectly from the project [including such emissions during construction] which are not subject to transportation conformity are subject to general conformity requirements and must be considered in the general conformity, applicability assessment and any subsequent conformity determination.

3. Should mitigation action be determined necessary, the air quality mitigation action suggested in the draft evaluation report at 5.3.16.4.2, will not mitigate criteria air pollutant ozone which is the only pollutant currently regulated under conformity. The mitigation action described in the report would control particulate matter (PM) only. Also, air quality monitoring performed at the construction site would not in itself qualify as a mitigation action, though it might be possible to design mitigation action in conjunction with the use of monitors.

The DEQ is available for consultation to assist you with implementation of the general conformity and transportation conformity regulations. Please contact Pat Salvaggio at (501) 765-0915 for assistance.

sincerely,



Gustave Von Rodungen
P.E.
Assistant Secretary

GVB/PS

c: Richard Boe, Corps of Engineers
Bennett Farrier, DEQ Engineering Section
John Beinam, EPA Region 6

Comments 1 and 2. The estimates on volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions previously submitted have been revised. The revised estimates are contained in Volume 6. Section 7. The data indicates that the emissions from construction equipment would total about one-half of the threshold level (100 tons/year). That would require a conformity determination. The only indirect emissions that appear to be applicable to this project are those associated with potential vehicular traffic detours and delays during project construction. The emissions from these mobile sources will be coordinated with the Regional Planning Commission to determine conformity with the Transportation Implementation Plan.

Comment 3. The mitigation action proposed in the report was meant to address the potential increase in airborne particulate matter (dust) from project construction. The proposed mitigation was not meant to mitigate for ozone.

State of Louisiana



James H. Jenkins, Jr.
Secretary

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Box Office/Box 980000
Baton Rouge, LA 70808-9800
(504)765-2800

M.J. "Mike" Foster
Governor

Mr. R. H. Schroeder, Jr., Chief
Planning Division
Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, La. 70160-0267

Attention: Mr. Richard Boe

Re: Draft evaluation report/Environmental
Impact Statement (EIS) and the
Environmental Appendix for the Mississippi
River Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting
Channels, CG80539

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has reviewed the document for the above referenced project and have found that we have no objections to the proposed action and concur with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report of October 1996.

However, we are very concerned with the placement of contaminated dredged material in wetlands. Contaminated dredged material should not be placed in wetlands. It should be disposed of in an approved manner. Even though the dredged material is being placed in a Corps of Engineers disposal area which contains wetlands, there is no justification for impacting these wetlands with contaminated material.

It is our understanding that applications for Section 404 permits requesting placement of contaminated materials into wetlands have always been denied by the Regulatory Functions Branch of the New Orleans District; when the receiving wetland area is less contaminated than the material to be put there.

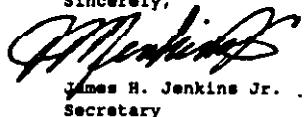
The 404(b)(1) evaluation for this project needs to be clarified. It does not appear to be consistent with similar evaluation done by the Regulation Functions Branch.

January 17, 1997

The plate contained in the draft report was misleading in that a larger area than necessary for disposal was indicated. The area proposed for dredged material disposal has been refined to avoid valuable, tidal wetlands. The currently planned disposal area is not subject to tidal inundation and does not function as estuarine fisheries habitat. Some of the disposal area is upland containing grasses and wax myrtle. The wetland part of the disposal area contains early successional woodland dominated by Chinese tallow and black willow. The USFWS agrees with us that this habitat is very low in quality for wildlife resources. Scarcity of surface water restricts fishery usage to small freshwater species. This habitat, although jurisdictional wetland, is very low in quality for fish and wildlife resources. There are no less-valuable habitats in the area where dredged material could be disposed. The volume of material (1,364,000 cubic yards) precludes hauling to a remote site.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this matter.

Sincerely,



James H. Jenkins Jr.
Secretary

JWT:fod

c: CMD
FWS
DEQ
NMFS



NEW ORLEANS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

EDWARD LEVELL, Jr.
Director of Aviation

MARK H. MORIAL
Mayor, City of New Orleans

February 26, 1997

Colonel William Conner
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Conner:

As a member of the Transportation Committee of the World Trade Center of New Orleans, I would like to add my endorsement to the U.S. Corps of Engineers' plans to replace the lock on the Industrial Canal in New Orleans. This lock has long served as a bottleneck to shipping on the national inland waterways system.

Although this project does not directly affect the movement of air passengers or cargo, it will have an important impact on the movement of intermodal goods. The elimination of this bottleneck will allow increased movement of products moving between barge and ship, rail and ocean as well as truck and ocean.

Waterborne transportation in Louisiana plays a major role in the state's economy. Significant numbers of people in Louisiana are employed in the waterborne transportation sector. Over \$20 billion of spending was generated in Louisiana by the port, industry and port users in 1994. This spending generated over \$110 million in state and local taxes for Louisiana.

Based on the positive impact on the Louisiana economy that will result from the removal of this impediment to marine navigation, I wholeheartedly support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' plans to replace the navigation lock on the Industrial Canal.

Sincerely,

Edward Levell, Jr.
Director of Aviation

New Orleans Aviation Board: RHEAUS J. ORTIGUE, JR., Chairman • FORTUNE "Buck" LARINE, Vice Chairman • Joseph E. BERNAL, Jr.,
RICHARD BRENNAN • Dennis M. FRIAS • Robert J. GEL, Ph.D. • Melvin MAHESO-BARRY, P.E. • New A. SMITH, Jr. • GM WASHINGTON
P.O. BOX 20007 • NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70141 • (504) 464-3536 • FAX (504) 465-1310

NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

4300 ALMONASTER AVENUE • NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70126

MORRIS L. HOLMES, Ed.D.
Superintendent



February 24, 1997

Clt. William Connor
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160

Dear Col. Connor

RE: Draft EIS, N.O. Industrial Canal Widening

The New Orleans Public School District has not yet taken a formal position on the canal widening project.

However, the following areas are of particular concern to the School District:

1. The plan acknowledges significant disruption for transportation flows in and out of the Lower Ninth Ward during the project implementation. Various mitigation strategies are proposed. However, they are incomplete with respect to adverse impacts on the public schools.
2. The plan includes the provision for additional school crossing guards stationed on each side of the canal on designated detour routes where school crossing guards are currently not stationed. In addition, pedestrian crosswalks with appropriate markings will be added to major streets on both sides of the canal. This question on new traffic or new detour routes is especially important to schools such as Martin Luther King, where Caffin Avenue will now take on greater traffic. Additional emphasis on pedestrian safety education for children should be made in addition to more guards.
3. The biggest impact from construction noise will occur during the driving of piles for the new St. Claude Avenue bridge. Driving will reportedly be scheduled during the summer specifically to minimize noise for schools. However, most schools have summer programs.
4. The plan acknowledges expected delays in school busing. However, it seems to be most concerned about the loss of tuition revenue for the Holy Cross School with additional funds for any loss in revenues to Holy Cross. Explicit provisions for mitigating many public school losses are lacking.

Paragraphs 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. With the inclusion of a temporary bridge at St. Claude Ave. and the reduction of the closure time at Claiborne Ave. to a couple of weeks, the impacts referred to in these paragraphs would no longer exist.

Paragraph 2. Coordination with the school system is intended to determine the most appropriate locations for the school crossing guards still needed during the bridge construction periods.

Paragraph 3. The pile driving would be scheduled at St. Claude Ave. so as to minimize impacts to the schools to the maximum extent possible.

RE: Draft EIS, N.O. Industrial Canal Widening cont'd.

5. The plan does promise to give additional funds for all local neighborhood schools, presumably including the public schools, for reimbursement for the higher costs of operating buses that would have to travel longer distances using detour routes. Public school costs should be explicitly included.
6. The assessment of impacts includes recognition that attendance of residents in public magnet schools may be significantly impacted by the transportation delays. However, the plan does not specifically propose any compensation for that impact but does include the issue in a list of impacts for which compensation would be justified.
7. The Noble Center, a citywide special education center, will be impacted just as the Holy Cross School. It is mentioned in the plan.
8. The report does not specifically mention anticipated problems of disrupting access of teachers, support staff, enrichment programs, and deliveries to the schools.
9. The environmental assessment makes vague references to the impact that the construction activities will have upon "community cohesion." It proposes a program of general mitigation in order to restore the community level of well-being. That plan includes some funds that would be used for a neighborhood revitalization program including educational programs. It also includes some funding for community facilities, such as supervised playgrounds during the construction. This mitigation should include compensation to provide additional after-school tutoring, recreational or co-curricular programs for the students.

Paragraph 9. The school system will be invited to participate in the Partnering Agreement and community-based task force that will help decide where best to expend the community impact mitigation funds. Some of those funds could be used for additional education opportunities.

Sincerely,



Kenneth J. Ducote
Director, Facility Planning

/be

pc:	Mrs. Maudelle Cade	Property File (Lawless High)
	Dr. Morris L. Holmes	Property File (Martin L. King Ele.)
	Dr. Linda Fortenberry	Property File (Hardin Ele.)
	Mr. Reginald Zeno	Property File (Armstrong Ele.)
	Mr. Earl Levingston	Property File (Noble Center)
	Ms. Stephanie Polk	Property File (Edison Ele.)
	Mr. Ronald Gearing	
	Ms. Shirley Taylor (Lawless High School)	
	Mrs. Doris Hicks (Martin Luther King Ele.)	
	Ms. Glenda Kemp (Hardin Ele.)	
	Ms. Thelva Brown (Armstrong Ele.)	
	Ms. Patricia McFarlin (Noble Center)	
	Ms. Rosemary Martin (Edison Ele.)	

The American Waterways Operators

Southern Regional Office

Pen American Life Center
60 Poydras Street
Suite 162
New Orleans, LA 70130
TEL (504) 524-3366
FAX (504) 568-9023

Ken Wells
Vice President - Southern Region



February 28, 1997

Colonel William Conner
District Engineer
New Orleans District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Re: Inner Harbor Navigation
Canal Lock Replacement

Dear Col. Conner

The American Waterways Operators (AWO) is the national trade association representing the inland and coastal barge and towing industry. As such, we want to express our support for the planned replacement of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock, more commonly known as the Industrial Canal Lock.

As the economic analysis included in volume 7 of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Draft Evaluation Report clearly shows, the lock is a part of a very important waterway for barge and towing companies. Roughly 10,000 tows use the lock every year, or more than one tow per hour. There is no other all-weather, year-round route for tows moving east and west between New Orleans and the eastern half of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The economic well-being of many companies rests on the availability and reliability of the lock. Excessive delays affect the profitability of those companies as well as their ability to effectively manage vessel utilization. Lock closures threaten the livelihood of some companies and the resulting shift of vessels onto other waterways can disrupt the rate structure of those waterways.

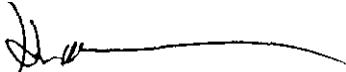
Beyond the importance of the lock to the towing industry, it serves as an important link in the inland waterway transportation system of ports, shippers and industries. The lock is used by barges carrying cargo from every inland waterway in America's heartland. The Draft Evaluation Report - Vol. 2 very clearly documents the role of the lock in connecting the major river systems and facilitating the movement of agricultural, chemical and petroleum products. It should be noted that the time sensitive nature of many of these cargoes, such as chemical and petroleum products, means that an untimely lock closure could severely impact facility operations. Additionally, the lock allows for the safe and controlled movement of large volumes of potentially hazardous and environmentally sensitive liquid cargo. The option of moving that product by rail or road would be less than desirable from a civil defense, emergency response or tugway planning standpoint.

In determining the future of the Industrial Canal Lock, we would urge the Corps to also look at the impact that a new lock could have on future growth over a multi-state area of the southern United States. The economic analysis in the evaluation report focuses on the potential growth in traffic based on the current industrial and commercial base of the region. However, it does not look at the businesses and facilities which may move to the region if the lock is replaced. The availability of inexpensive and reliable transportation is a determining factor in the decision to locate or expand a business. Conversely, uncertainty over the availability of that transportation has a negative impact on future development. The state of the current lock -- aging, unreliable and prone to breakdown -- most certainly has a chilling effect on economic development along the eastern Gulf Coast. More than three decades of debate over replacing the lock has sent an extremely negative signal to prospective industries. Prolonging the debate only hurts the prospects for regional economic development.

If, on the other hand, the lock is replaced with a more efficient, reliable structure, it will become one of the selling points for the entire region. Companies making site selection decisions will be able to factor in their ability to transport fuel for their energy needs, raw materials and finished products inexpensively. Potentially, this project could drive economic development well into the next century.

The engineers involved in planning this lock replacement have attempted to be as responsive to the needs of the local community as they have been to the needs of the lock users. It is time to move forward and replace the Industrial Canal Lock. Thank you for allowing us to comment on this project. I am enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope and would appreciate a response to indicate that these comments were received.

Sincerely,



Ken Wells
Vice President - Southern Region



601 Poydras, Suite 1700
New Orleans, LA 70130
(504) 527-5900
FAX: (504) 527-6950
chamber@podo.org
<http://podo.org/chamber>

February 18, 1997

Colonel William L. Conner
Attn: CELMN-PM-M
New Orleans District Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Conner,

This letter is in response to the request for review by interested parties of the draft evaluation report and Environmental Impact Statement for Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting Channels study.

On January 14, 1997, The Chamber Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse the Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study for the Tentative Selected Plan of the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal Lock Replacement Project. We believe the lock replacement is a critical intermodal project that will enhance economic competitiveness of our region.

The Chamber leadership is of the opinion that the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal Lock project is a wise use of scarce infrastructure capital. Ultimately it will improve the ability to compete as a region in a global economy and ensure a secure waterway for national defense. The IHNC lock is a vital link in an intermodal system that impacts the maritime, rail, and trucking industries and ultimately the users of these services nationwide. If the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal Lock is not replaced, it will undermine efforts to produce full regional integration in transportation infrastructure and constitute a major setback for regional economic success.

Comments noted.

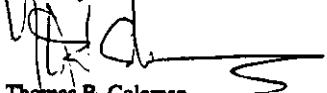


February 18, 1997
Colonel William L. Conner
page 2

It is evident to us that the planning process comprehensively looked at all possible scenarios, fulfilling planning mandates and environmental considerations in determining the best alternative. Given the long history of the planning process and the urgent need to ensure a stable waterborne route which will service the future needs of the region, it is imperative that the project proceed without further delay.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Bob Gayle, the Chamber's President and CEO, phone 527-6920.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Coleman
Chairman of the Board

cc: Joe Dicharry
Les Waguespack
Jack Walker

February 17, 1997

Gerard J. Dicharry, Jr.
Sr. Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

IRISMAS
o c i o f f e s t
RE: New Lock and Connecting Channels

Dear Mr. Dicharry:

Christmas In October, a neighborhood revitalization program of the Preservation Resource Center, has a vested interest in the Holy Cross and Bywater neighborhoods. The mission of Christmas In October is to improve the quality of life of low-income elderly and/or disabled homeowners through home repair that is accomplished by volunteer labor. Christmas In October creates a partnership with neighborhood associations to achieve this end.

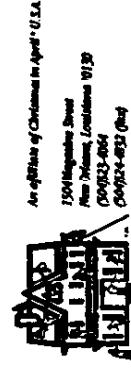
Between 1992 and 1995 52 homes have been repaired in Bywater alone. Since 1995, 28 homes have been repaired and an additional 15 are anticipated for 1997 in Holy Cross. This commitment to both Holy Cross and Bywater leads us to our concern over the lock expansion and subsequent demolition of the St. Claude Ave. bridge and the erection of an intrusive monolithic flood wall.

The demolition of the bridge and rerouting of traffic to Claiborne will be a major setback to these neighborhoods as they work towards revitalization. The St. Claude bridge is the link for Holy Cross to New Orleans. It services our clients and allows for pedestrians and bikes (a feature that is not possible at the Claiborne bridge) a safe access to New Orleans.

In addition, the bridge's demolition and construction period of 12 to 13 years will negatively impact local businesses on St. Claude. These businesses provide our elderly clientele with local shopping. Should these services close within this period our low income clientele would be forced to shop at distances that would require either bus transportation or a taxi service.

The plan put forth by the Army Corps of Engineers does not include the possible erection of a temporary bridge on S. Claude. Would this not alleviate the above stated problems, and could the additional cost of this plan be offset by the mitigation costs the Corps would incur through:

- * relocation of businesses and employees who have lost their jobs
- * the cost of a temporary shuttle service for pedestrians



Architectural drawing of a temporary bridge.

1304 Magazine Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
(504) 522-4565
(504) 522-4562 (fax)

A Project of the Preservation Resource Center

- *payment of 4 traffic controllers (for minimum of 12 years)
- *monetary compensation to non-public schools that have decreased enrollment
- *reimbursement to RTA for lost revenue
- *reimbursement to homeowners for decreased property values
- *and all other related costs

The other main concern is the construction of the floodwalls. Within the Army Corps survey there appears to be no serious study on the impact that this wall will have on the long term Holy Cross neighborhood revitalization efforts. The only concession is on page EIS-10 that states these flood walls will reduce recreational use of the intended area. However, in the guidelines section of the study on page D-4-8 the statement labeled "q" concerns itself with "adverse alteration or destruction of public parks, shoreline access points...or other areas of public use and concern.". The reports response was on page D-5-8 "No such areas would be adversely impacted".

In addition, there was no diagram of the relation of this wall to the neighborhood.

This oversight should be addressed and its impact on the neighborhood should be fully studied.

We thank you for your time in addressing our concerns.

Sincerely,

Muffin Balart

Muffin Balart
Chairman



Kristin Gisleson Palmer
Director

cc: ✓Leslie S. Waguepack
Richard Boe
Stephen Walsh
John Koeferel



ACEC

February 26, 1997

**CONSULTING
ENGINEERS
COUNCIL OF
LOUISIANA**

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P O Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Attention: Colonel William Conner, P.E.
District Engineer

**A Resolution Adopted By The
Consulting Engineers Council Of Louisiana
In Support Of The Proposed Lock At The
Inner Harbor Navigation Canal In
New Orleans, Louisiana**

PO Box 1549

Baton Rouge LA 70821-1549

Phone 504-387-0843

Fax/Fax 504-387-0844

Warren J. Wilde,
Executive Director

Colonel Conner, we understand that the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) is soliciting public input on the proposed Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock Replacement project. The Consulting Engineers Council of Louisiana (CEC/L) recognizes that this is an important and beneficial project. Therefore, the New Orleans Chapter adopted the following resolution in favor of the project.

WHEREAS, the US Army Corps of Engineers is planning to construct a new lock at the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal in New Orleans, Louisiana;

WHEREAS, a new lock is badly needed because the present lock is obsolete and too small;

WHEREAS, the construction of a new lock will benefit the users of the lock;

WHEREAS, the construction of a new lock will provide great economic benefits to the Port of New Orleans, the greater New Orleans region, and southeast Louisiana;

WHEREAS, the US Army Corps of Engineers has taken steps to ensure that the residents and businesses in the area of construction will not be adversely affected;

WHEREAS, the members of the New Orleans Chapter of the Consulting Engineers Council of Louisiana have taken all of the above into consideration;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the New Orleans Chapter of the Consulting Engineers Council of Louisiana at their regularly scheduled meeting of February 25, 1997, in Metairie, Louisiana, unanimously agreed to support the construction of a new lock at the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The foregoing is certified to be a true and correct copy.

Frank E. Lourie
Frank E. Lourie
David E. Lourie, P.E., President
Consulting Engineers Council of Louisiana
New Orleans Chapter

" serving engineers in private practice"



**GREATER NEW ORLEANS BARGE
FLEETING ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 355

Destrehan, Louisiana 70047

"Pride Through Professionalism"

February 20th, 1997

Colonel William L. Conner
District Engineer
Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

RE: INNER HARBOR NAVIGATION
CANAL LOCK (INDUSTRIAL
CANAL LOCK) PROJECT

Dear Colonel Conner:

On behalf of the Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association, Inc., (G.N.O.B.F.A.), I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak at the public hearing that was held in New Orleans on January 27th, 1997 regarding the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock (Industrial Canal Lock) Project.

As indicated at the meeting on January 27th, our organization is comprised of forty-six (46) member companies, which may have fleeting operations located from the mouth of the Mississippi River north to Baton Rouge, Louisiana as well as operations located on the Harvey and Industrial Canal. They also may own and operate barges of all types, provide transportation services, and own and operate towing vessels which provide marine services that may be required.

As a result of the frequent long delays at the Industrial locks, these companies are sustaining millions of dollars in losses every year. Consequently, for this and many other reasons indicated to you on prior occasions, it is imperative that a new lock structure be constructed as soon as possible.

For the record, the Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association, Inc. is in favor of the project for the construction of a new Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock and related improvements as proposed during the Corps of Engineers presentation of January 27th, 1997.

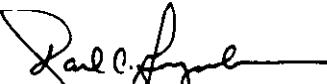
BOARD OF GOVERNORS-Karl Gonzales-President Bill Grantham-Vice President Deborah Harris-Secretary Fred Renouder-President
Robert Barnes-Northern Director, Georg Janssen-Southern Director, Ralph Diaz-Director, Al Faro, Cleter Felder-Past President, Council
ADVISORY BOARD-Alan G. Brackett-Hubert Madison & Roland Stephen W. Matelle-Lawyer & Associates, Inc.
Ken Wells-American Waterfront Contractors, Richard Wright-Richard Wright & Associates, Inc.

Colonel William L. Conner
District Engineer
Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
February 20th, 1997
Page 2

Thanking you in advance for your attention and considerations concerning
this matter, I remain,

Very truly yours,

GREATER NEW ORLEANS BARGE FLEETING
ASSOCIATION, INC.

By: 
KARL C. GONZALES
President

KCG:kg