

March 2, 1997

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

Re: IHNC Draft Proposal MRGO

Dear Colonel Conner,

Here is a list of questions submitted for your response in consideration of this project:

(1) Delays to Barge Traffic

- a. How are delays to barge traffic logged?
- b. Are these figures based on actual record keeping and if so, on what documentary evidence are they based? (Or are they merely estimates and if so, on what documentary evidence are they based?)
- c. Delays to navigation at the IHNC lock are significant, averaging between 6.3 and 16.2 hours per lockage, annually, since 1984. What accounts for the variance in these delays?
- d. From what data is this information compiled? Are they written records estimates?

(2) Looking at other solutions

- a. What river traffic management studies has the Port undertaken with the Coast Guard, Corps of Engineers and river pilots to increase efficiency and productivity of the industrial canal before assuming that physical increases of size were necessary?
- b. What innovative measures and state of the art techniques in communications have the managers of traffic and facilities brought to bear on the problems of traffic prior to proposing expansion of the canal?
- c. How has the problem been addressed prior to the current proposal?
- d. Is it possible these water traffic problems could be solved in some other way?

(3) Location of the IHNC site

- a. "The IHNC site is located in a densely populated urban area." Is it suitable, appropriate, and prudent for a water project of such magnitude and such predictable dire impact to be undertaken and situated in such an area?
- b. Is it prudent particularly when the Corps has by its own admission little experience in urban projects and this one is opposed by a great and growing number of residents of the affected area?
- c. Due to the complex nature of this densely populated urban area, are there not very likely to be other major costs and impacts which have not been included in your report? Is it fair to dismiss the impact on residential real estate mere "perception" of residents?
- d. Is it scientific to predict that real estate value will rise without evidence?
- e. Is it true that Corps of Engineers projects primarily take place in areas where the people are African American and low-income? In Rudolph Mose's letter to the editor (Times Picayune, December 1996), he asks if racism forms a guiding principle for the Corps. Col Clow replies in Feb 1996 that such a statement is "ridiculous". But is it? Is this response appropriate to a serious question?

Page 1, item 1a. Information to calculate delays to barge traffic is logged at the lock. This information is then electronically transmitted to the Navigation Data Center (NDC) in Washington, DC, where it is maintained in the Lock Performance Monitoring System (LPMS) database. Statistics are published monthly for selected key locks, including the IHNC Lock, and annually for all locks.

b. Lock personnel record the actual time each vessel arrives at the lock and the time it starts its approach into the lock. The difference in these times represent the delay time for each vessel.

c. The variance in average delay per tow at the IHNC Lock is explained by the variation in the Mississippi River stages, which causes fluctuations in lockage times, variations in vessel traffic patterns, and lock downtime.

d. This data is compiled from information recorded by lock personnel.

Page 1, item 2a. IHNC Lock operates under a "ready-to-serve" policy. This requires all tows requiring more than one lockage cycle to hire an assisting tow boat to move the additional tow segments through the lock chamber. This practice significantly increases lock efficiency.

b. Congestion problems at IHNC Lock are not the result of poor communication.

c. Prior investigations have considered lock replacement at various sites and "small scale" improvements such as replacement of St. Claude Avenue Bridge.

d. Replacing the existing St. Claude Avenue Bridge with a mid or high level bridge and removing bridge curfews at St. Claude Avenue, Claiborne Avenue, and Florida Avenue Bridges were considered as an alternative to lock replacement.

Page 1, item 3a. The project as revised after the public review period does not have the dire impacts.

b. The Corps has lots of experience in developing projects in urban areas. However, the type of projects is not normally a lock project.

c. It is possible, but not likely, that some impacts could be more severe than originally envisioned. Real estate property values are a very sensitive issue. The complex forces that impact market value are numerous and cannot be isolated to a single issue such as the lock replacement study. It is possible that some impacts could be more severe than envisioned. Continued coordination will help insure that impacts are offset.

d. Real estate values have generally risen in the New Orleans metropolitan area in the last few years. This was illustrated in a recent article in the Times Picayune talking about real estate values.

e. It is untrue that Corps projects take place primarily in areas where the people are primarily African-Americans.

f. At issue is not the personal feelings of Corps members but consistent verifiable project selection choices and impact, resting disproportionately on these populations. When these project plans are viewed with demographic overlays, it is evident that the Corps habitually selects positive for race. Whether these populations are intentionally targeted is beside the point. What is at issue is the fact that this pattern is consistent and does disproportionate harm to this community from the selection process onwards.

(4) Public Review

- a. Have local residents been given full opportunity to ask questions and express their views about the project? Have there been many publicly announced meetings for comment on this draft proposal?
- b. Does the accelerated timetable actually pursued by the Corps seem appropriate for achieving required public response?
- c. Is one official public hearing on a week's notice sufficient for a project in a densely populated urban area? Are not affected parties, who live in this area more likely to have many differing time schedules, constraints and responsibilities making it more difficult to respond at one public hearing? Is this compounded by having this small response opportunity's clock ticking during the less than two months that include the Christmas holidays, Sugar Bowl, Superbowl and Mardi Gras, and when great numbers of residents are working in the service industry so critical to the welfare of the larger community?
- d. To respect the people here in this neighborhood to have adequate time to protect their own interests in this time period is unrealistic and a deprivation of basic civil right. Is it possible that decision makers are so driven by the need to complete this proposal that they cannot see this not unjust? Does the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in the pursuit of challenges and achievement for the nation, keep up challenges for the less well heeled and itself surly from the constitutional footing of its mandate?
- e. Isn't it true that the extension of the response period from February 27 to March 3, 1997, was granted not because of the many requests from this neighborhood but of people from St. Bernard Parish and their congressman?
- f. Rights of the area residents aside, is not it appropriate that the project itself be forced to consider all possible project costs that bear upon it directly and indirectly which the public will be called upon to assume?
- g. Does not stewardship of this project imply that the public interest be protected by giving sufficient time and opportunity to discover the greatest range of liabilities as well as the positive implications of the project?
- h. Has appropriate consideration and weight been given to the years of community building and investment in homes, businesses, institutions in the neighborhoods adjacent to the canal? How many homes were expropriated for the original project when this neighborhood was a hundred years old? What happened to the Agnew Boys' Home? Was not the Ursulines Academy there a hundred years before the canal opened on its expropriated property?
- i. Have the neighborhoods adjacent to the canal been given sufficient and real opportunity to comment on the gradual expansion over the years from a simple barge canal to being a part of the intercoastal waterway system, pass from local to federal control, and then become a part of MRGO?
- j. Has not the surrounding community grown also during the eighty years and matured itself and its historic, cultural, physical and other resources? Is it so strange these neighborhoods are unable to give up what they and their forebears have spent their lives building and which they may wish to share with and pass down to coming generations? Can neighborhood development be overlooked as if time and space have stood still for the community while the canal expands as if in a vacuum? Has not the canal reached maximum size already, crowded against the neighborhood so that any move by one is destructive to the other?
- k. How prudent is it to consider such heavy public investment in a canal that already has so real expansion room without destroying the investments of whole communities of long standing and that has a design life of a mere 50 years? After that what?
- l. Perhaps it would be more prudent to consider the closing of this canal than its upgrading if it is indeed so obsolete?

f. The information presented here is unfounded and there is no basis for such allegations.

Page 2, Item 4a. Yes. In January 1995, two meetings were held to solicit comments on the community impact mitigation plan. In addition, a local project office was established to allow for input from local residents. The official public coordination period on the draft document which includes the EIS was extended to 90 days which is considerably more time than normally allowed.

b. Yes.

c. The notice was widely distributed. The media was contacted and did present information about the public meeting. The 3 months allowed for public review of the document was significantly longer than the normal time allowed and required by law and administrative regulations.

d. No.

e. Yes.

f. All quantified costs have been included in the economic analysis and the benefit-to-cost ratio. The analysis also includes mitigation costs designed to account for unquantified project impacts.

g. The extended planning period for the project and public participation in developing the mitigation plan has allowed sufficient time to identify the greatest range of project liabilities.

h. Yes, appropriate consideration has been given to the institutions in the adjacent neighborhoods. Impacts relating to the original canal and lock project are not relevant to the current project.

(Note: No i.)

j. The report recognizes the recent improvements in the neighborhoods.

k. No.

l. This would not be a prudent action.

(3) Planning Process Ethics

- a. Would the public be better served were project planners and institutions held more responsible for their actions in carrying out public planning processes?
- b. Is it ethical that the public be asked to bear the brunt of project related costs that have been ignored or not identified as such, while planners, unlike other professionals, apparently escape both criminal and civil liability for decisions which short change the process?
- c. Regardless of feelings, are not Corps planners willing to perpetuate decisions which penalize less powerful and underrepresented interests? Is this not underscored in this instance by the publication of a ponderous eight volume project draft proposal which has enormous implications for a primarily poor, largely African American community which is given little notice and little opportunity to respond?
- d. Would you have confidence in us planning in your neighborhood as you plan in ours?
- e. Is there any evidence that there is a revolving door between Corps and Port executives, such that a retiring officer of the Corps might be hired by the Port and vice-versa? Is there any possible conflict of interest here and if so, what might that be?

(4) Violet and other sites.

- a. Is it true that while examining the Violet site the project planners ran into strong and at times violent opposition from residents of the area?
- b. How did this opposition exhibit itself? Is it true that there were slashes? Was other personal or public property damaged in these instances? Were threats made and what were they?
- c. Did these incidents influence project planners to move the project to the present IHNC site?
- d. Was there not also opposition from politicians and wealthy landowners to the Violet site? From what levels did this opposition come?
- e. Were any members of the congressional delegation involved in discussions about the Violet site, and if so, what did they express about the matter? Did this have an effect on the process relative to choice of site?
- f. Was President Carter made aware of these important factors considering the choice at Violet or did the Corps present merely environmental considerations to him?
- g. Does it not seem strange that the Corps of Engineers would be deterred from Violet by environmental considerations when it has been so willing to alter nature in virtually everyone of its other projects?
- h. Is it not true that the environmental considerations of the Violet site have been such that, in the absence of political opposition, these were capable of remedy or at least mitigated to a very high degree? And at a cost very much less than the site at the Industrial Canal?
- i. Isn't this even true today--political opposition aside--that Violet would be much cheaper and preferable?
- j. Doesn't it seem that Senator Lynn Dean's suggestion to build bridges beside and parallel to St Bernard Highway and Judge Perez Drive before the canal is dug, would significantly lessen inconvenience and cost of the project at Violet? Isn't it also true that building temporary bridges at St Claude and Claiborne in New Orleans would significantly raise project costs yet this is actually being proposed?
- k. With more recent definitions of wetlands than twenty years ago wouldn't it be more feasible to build in St Bernard today than it was years ago? Is there not a tremendous cost difference between building in New Orleans and at Violet? Should not the public be made aware of this?
- l. If Violet has been ruled out because of cost and feasibility, should not the IHNC, which obviously has many complex costs that are not being addressed by this linear project with heavy impacts and its unusually hazy of due process?
- m. Was the large and mostly vacant Meroux tract between Araki and Chalmette ever considered for the lock site? If not, why? If so, why was it, now the site of the Chalmette ship and Port of St Bernard ruled out without being mentioned? Was it quashed because of Mr Meroux who considered the land too valuable to be sold or expropriated for a canal, and had the clout to preempt consideration behind the scenes?

(3) The process that involved neighborhood participation involved a sincere professional effort on the part of the Corps to recognize the interests of the community.

(4) a-o. Opposition to the Violet site has historically been expressed by St. Bernard residents and elected officials. Congressional delegates were involved in the discussions. The recent rationale for eliminating the Violet site and the evaluation of other sites is included in Volume I of the report.

- o. What about consideration of the other possibilities for the FHC site? Why was the deepest, most radical plan chosen over the other options? What factors were considered? Why was refurbishing at present levels passed over in consideration? Were less extreme levels of upgrade given due consideration or were they merely nominal options?
- p. How often has the St Claude Bridge broken down in its history and why? What kinds of repairs had to be made besides routine maintenance and collisions?
- Is not this bridge actually very reliable, much more than other ones over the canal, with very little down time, except when something runs into it? Mr. Gallwey of the Port has stated on more than one occasion that this bridge cannot be repaired indefinitely, and would be impossible to build new at a reasonable cost. What evidence is there to support that? If bids were put out widely enough, would suitable response not come for any need of this bridge for many years? Can this be out of the range of ingenuity or actual cost? Has this been researched?
- q. What if this were the Brooklyn Bridge? Does this lift for tall ships? Should it be removed for the improved commerce? Does it seem fitting that this now historic St Claude Bridge, eligible for the National Historic Register, a credit to the city and a badge of the neighborhood, be shown the door by synchronization? This at enormous cost? Is it not the sum for the innovative, unique and historic locks?

and q. Not relevant.

5a. No.

b. Not relevant.

c. The limits of the Port of New Orleans were not a factor in site selection.

d. Not relevant.

e. None.

f. The analysis indicates that there will not be a significant change in ship traffic on the MR-GO with project construction.

g. No. The extent of the investment is unknown. The impact would be insignificant.

ha. The black and yellow structures are mooring dolphins for all navigation traffic.

b. No. Normal maintenance of existing navigation structures.

c. Normal maintenance funds.

d. The Corps of Engineers is.

e. Publication of the normal notice to mariners.

(i) The Port of New Orleans and the Port of St Bernard

- a. Did the establishment of Port of St Bernard help that parish avoid placement of the canal at Violet or elsewhere in the parish?
- b. By removing this parish from inclusion in the same agency known as the Port of New Orleans is not St Bernard better able to resist such an attempt?
- c. Do the limitations of the local sponsor, the Port of New Orleans in this case, have bearing on the geographical range of possible sites, and in fact is the only site acceptable to the Port of New Orleans some variation of the site at the Industrial Canal in New Orleans?
- d. Does artificial political restraint not mean that a consideration of available sites on more objective factors is not possible? Is it not more appropriate that a state agency most of whose members are appointed by the governor, seek a thorough, objective consideration of cost-effective and reasonable solutions in cooperation with other regional parishes than each parish going it alone to solve regional and even national problems?
- e. What influence has the investment by the Port and private interests such as SeaLand Container Corporation in the France Road Terminal area influenced the decision to choose the Industrial Canal site for expansion from a barge canal to a deep draft ship canal?
- f. What are the implications for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet whether or not this canal is deepened for deep-draft traffic? Will it be closed or more in demand? What considerations are involved?
- g. Have investments by the Port and others in heavy shipping facilities in the canal in effective-emptied the community planning process involving the neighborhoods along the Industrial Canal? What is the nature and extent of this MRGO terminal investment? How will it be affected if the project as proposed is not a proved?

(j) Recent improvements to the Canal

- a. What are the four recently installed black and yellow structures near the entrance to the industrial canal off the Herbert Defense Complex? Are these tie-up for ships? They certainly seem more than routine because of their large scale and obvious cost.
- b. Are they an early part of the larger project already arrived while the project is being well considered? One of whom plan have they come and for what anticipated need?
- c. What money paid for them?
- d. Who is responsible for building them and maintaining them?
- e. What public announcements were made regarding their planning and realization?

(7) Impact on Residential Real Estate

- a. Why has the depression in property values, both real and anticipated, experienced in neighborhoods adjacent to the canal been characterized as "perception" rather than factual? This is not beyond the grasp of financial forecasting. It is certainly documentable statistically. Any study claiming to study the neighborhood impact should have undertaken this straight off. It has certainly been complained about long and loudly enough by residents here. Whenever publicity about the canal comes residential real estate drops. The real estate section does not broach this most obvious critical issue except to say that no impact is expected on landowners!
- b. Declining residential property values translates into a tremendous project cost which by being ignored, is shifted to the neighborhood, isn't it? This is not really fair, is it?
- c. Do you really expect that citizens who have been uncompensated for years for loss in property value would be willing to endure a clearly predictable but unmediated further decline in values? These neighborhoods are not willing to bear this financial brunt of the project and this, in addition to safety concerns, is a large part of the opposition to this endless canal project. We have lived with it for eight years and more. The value of home is all most people here have in savings for the future. This project needs to account for the fluctuation in that value and be willing to designate this as a real project cost.
- d. Would you be willing to buy a home and live here among us now, and even more, with this project?

(8) Threat to the Neighborhoods

- a. Widening and deepening the canal to increase the volume and type of water traffic poses very real and further threats to adjacent neighborhoods, does it not? This is true certainly of anticipated traffic in the canal, and outside of it on the river as well. Having bigger ships and more traffic in the river heading in and out of the canal along one of the busiest and most congested stretches of river increases the long term risk to neighborhoods along the water exponentially. Yet this study says that because the proposed project site is already a barge canal there will be no increase in risk!
- b. What about the Bright Field? Suppose this ship had not been stopped by crushing the Riverwalk? Had it continued north downstream at a good speed with the same trajectory it would have cut deeply into the levee along Holy Cross. And this was a ship full of grain. Suppose it were full of ammonium nitrate benzene?
- c. Suppose in the fog such ships and barges of even higher traffic crash into the levee or wharf or into each other? Is the risk no greater?
- d. For the people living in the neighborhoods here this increase in the type and volume of river traffic is an unacceptable risk. Your proposal to turn a small barge canal into a major thoroughfare laden with a much higher probability of dangerous incidents does not even discuss this truly major impact. Because of the danger to our families' lives, health and well-being we must consider it and reject this project because of it. There is no amount of compensation that can take care of this risk. No one would feel safe leaving their children and spouses home while they went into the city to work. And compensation after the fact of a disaster would never be sufficient. Would you expect us to let you build this so we could say "I told you so" after an incident which took our lives and those of our families? Would you even respect us if we let you heap this risk on us?
- e. The disaster at the Riverwalk caused by the Bright Field hitting a structure that was built in harm's way. The Holy Cross neighborhood, however, was not built in harm's way. It far precedes the canal and these "improvements", which by scooping out the old barge channel for deeper water, bring harm's way to us increasingly. This is a project highly imprudent and unacceptable to members of this community.
- f. Using great steel pilings and building up an ugly concrete seawall to lessen this risk is just as unacceptable, not only highlighting that risk, but essentially diminishing one of the most salient enjoyments and prides of the neighborhood and the city, the open levee at Holy Cross.
- g. Would you -- yourselves and yours -- come to live among us now with confidence, even without fearing the long and ugly shadow of this proposal?

7a., b. and c. Decline in values can be documented. The cause and effect relationship between the decline in values and this project has not been established.

d. Not relevant.

3a. Increased ship traffic in the canal imposes a minimal additional risk because vessels will be tug assisted and at slow speeds. Increases in ship traffic on the river is not related to the lock project.

b. This situation does not describe situations related to this project.

c. Comment noted.

d. Comment noted.

e. Comment noted.

f. Floodwalls are being constructed for flood control, and not navigator safety.

g. Not pertinent to the project.

(9) The Mitigation Plan

- a. The Boggs Amendment mandating consultation with the neighborhoods about the project and its mitigation assumes some agreement and merging of interests. Consultation implies a good measure of consent, does it not? Did the "neighborhood working group" process set up for this purpose not only fail to reach agreement on mitigation but see broad opposition grow, based on the clearly nonmitigatable impacts of a project clearly too radical for those neighborhoods? Even the "mitigation plan" offered by the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association as an exercise in neighborhood planning was later withdrawn from the mitigation table, though few of its recommendations were embraced, by a board which had made up its mind to oppose the project because of irreparable harm to the community.
- b. What about the community consultation process being shortened and cut off unilaterally by the Port/Corps because of this opposition while at the same time franchising in video and print for wider consumption the falsehood that the project was in effect born out of a partnership with the community? The Corps has publicly indicated strong neighborhood involvement, consent and partnership when the opposite is true. Not only has there been no real consultation or meaningful compliance with the Boggs measure, but this legislation which was envisioned to protect neighborhood interests and ensure a fair process, has been intentionally circumvented by the Corps of Engineers and the Port by rather self-serving interpretation.
- c. We object to this fundamental and harmful misinterpretation of the facts put forth by these agencies publicly in the pursuit of their own very limited and private "public interests." Were this project to be approved because of this misrepresentation the neighborhood would be irreparably harmed. That is why we objected in the first place!
- d. We agreed as a neighborhood to participate in this proposed project planning process only with the strongest assurances of Mr. Dickey that there would be no project unless the community wanted it. This was emphasized repeatedly during the first year of working group talks. When the report was published it was hard to find such a statement anywhere in the minutes. We consider this change a breach of the promise that enabled the talks to take place.
- e. Another very strong assurance was that the Florida high rise bridge to be built by the state of Louisiana in partnership with the federal government would be in place before the rest of the project began. This statement also was made after this first year when it became apparent that this bridge would be possibly long in coming. This also we consider a breach of promise.

(10) The Economic Study

- a. The economic study submitted in support of the increased demand does not seem to relate the increase in commodities such as coal and steel to measurable trends of these commodities in the canal. It requires a leap of faith to imagine that an increase in coal production and demand would mean more demand through the canal. In fact coal production may be expected to decrease because new regulations on coal burning plants have required plants to look at other options besides coal such as natural gas, which is unlikely to utilize the canal. Crude petroleum projections are based on regional crude production, not on canal trends of this commodity which are proven inconsistent from 1987-90. Even with this questionable analysis, projections show a decline in the first ten years of traffic and an off-setting increase in the following ten years--yielding an overall impact of zero. Petroleum products by your own figures show a slight increase over the long term, based on future levels of regional use. Other commodity groups show an overall decline or small growth over the next 20 years. Very weak trends with little linkage to actual experience seems to be little recommendation for expansion of the canal, particularly since so large an expenditure of funds, mostly public, is involved.

9a. Comment noted.

b. The HCNA mitigation plan is included as a part of Volume 2 of the report and some of the measures proposed are included in the project's community impact mitigation plan.

c. The process was temporarily stopped at times to allow for more detailed studies of the engineering and design of the project. These times when the process was halted were required to address concerns surfaced by the neighborhood working group.

d. Comment noted.

e. It was never intended or stated that the neighborhoods would have "veto" power or this project.

f. The Florida Avenue high-rise bridge is not a part of the Federal project. The replacement of the Florida Avenue rail-road bridge is the only requirement of Florida Avenue for this project's implementation.

10a. Projections of all major commodity groups do reflect historically trends of canal traffic. Further, projections of coal explicitly account for the requirement of the Clean Air Act and the specific anticipated responses by the coal burning plants that move coal through the IHNC.

b. On the supply side you assume that an increased canal capacity would automatically draw increased shipping. Supply projections without also projecting the results of competitive response from other places and modes of transport seems a very narrow and shallow basis to be deep drafting from with my taxpayer's money. How can total real costs of shipping of any given movement via alternative non-system means of transportation be assumed constant throughout time? You say modeling the costs of alternative modes of transportation is beyond the scope of the study you have done, yet we are talking a \$510 million (and likely much more) project with \$15 already spent in planning that is not really well spent by your own analysis. The economic part of this proposal seems to be unsustainably lightweight to bear the weight of this project and justify the public expenditure.

c. This conclusion is particularly important in the light of the tremendous unidentified and ignored costs of the project itself which, once committed, the public will bear. Among these costs are increased environmental damage to the wetlands because of higher traffic, increased toxicity to the natural environment and animal and human populations, increased safety risks to the neighborhoods, depressed residential real estate values, loss of business value and livelihood, loss of the historic charm and development potential for not only the historic locks, St Claude Bridge, trees and historic open levee but for the whole neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods as a part of the fabric of the city with its wondrous economic potential. Who does the Corps of Engineers expect to bear these costs for the project?

d. Ignored is loss to surrounding property values, and therefore to local business and residents, because of the nuisance created by increased usage of the lock which causes traffic congestion for those going over the canal. As a result of the traffic created by lock usage, other routes can be predicted to experience higher traffic costs causing delays, maintenance and repair, and potential property devaluation.

Ignored is the long term loss to St Bernard businesses due to a very probable but denied deterioration of Lower Ninth Ward neighborhoods in spite of mitigation attempts, resulting in decreased spending for consumer commodities presently purchased in St Bernard Parish.

Shouldn't a project of this magnitude be based on clearly considered benefits for all parties and not exhibit such glaring gaps? This study seems funnelled into the decision making as after-thought, not bias.

#### (1) MRGO

- a. How many ships on average per day use the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet?
  - b. What does it cost to keep it open for these ships by dredging, etc. as a daily average?
  - c. Since the marsh is further eroded by ship wakes, when are the speed laws in the MRGO going to begin to be enforced for large ships whose wakes due the most damage?
  - d. When is the environmental damage caused by the creation and continuation of the MRGO going to be reversed?
  - e. Should this reversal of damage be undertaken by the Corps which has had little successful experience in wetland restoration, or should it be given by competitive bid to other contractors to devise and execute a solution to this ongoing problem?
  - f. How can the Holy Cross and other neighborhoods contemplate giving over to the present proposed IIRMC project of the Corps of Engineers which has no experience in a project in an urban area and which has left behind a wake of destruction not only in the MRGO but for the Tombigbee, the Red, the Pearl and numerous others?
  - g. When is the Corps of Engineers going to clean up the unanticipated and uncosted problems associated with its work - projects that have caused enormous disruption in the environment and lives? Problems that it has by default left others to deal with at enormous ongoing cost?
- Are these not credibility and competence questions to be answered not with words but by deeds alone?

b. The analysis assumes that the relative difference in transportation costs (exclusive of water-way delays) between system and non-system means of transportation are constant through time, not the absolute costs.

c. All quantified costs have been included in the economic analysis and the benefit-to-cost ratio. The analysis also includes mitigation costs designed to account for unquantified impacts.

d. The analysis includes an evaluation of post construction vehicular traffic. This analysis indicates that congestion would actually be slightly improved compared to a no action scenario.

11a. An average of two ships per day use the MR-GO.

b. The average annual cost to dredge the MR-GO is approximately 6 to 7 million dollars.

c. MR-GO being studied in another report.

d. MR-GO being studied in another report.

e. Not relevant to this project.

f. Corps does have experience in urban areas.

g. Not relevant to this project.

Remaining comments in the letter are noted.

Has the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers really been listening? We from this neighborhood have been thrown together with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for some time now about this project. We have always said we do not consent. We have always said the same thing: No! When will you hear us and respect our decision?

Does not any plan of development of this waterway need to satisfy the real needs of this community and be a win-win proposal? We have not seen that proposal. We have not seen a process which could possibly lead to such a proposal. The offer of mere mitigation for essential detriment from this project can not be and is not acceptable.

Sincerely,



John Koefert  
415 Tupelo Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70117

# The Times-Picayune

ASHTON PHELPS  
Chairman of the Board 1967-1983  
Issued daily by The Times-Picayune Publishing Corp. at  
3800 Howard Ave., New Orleans, La. 70140

## Clarification

**New Orleans**  
Thank you for printing my letter on the proposed Industrial Canal lock replacement Nov. 29. I would like to clarify that my letter reflected my personal opinion and was not an official expression of the Holy Cross Community Development Corp. While I am a past president of the organization, Mrs. Elaine Jackson is the current president.

Rudolph L. Muse

## YOUR OPINIONS | Letters

### Residents not keen about Industrial Canal plans

**New Orleans**  
Re: the lead story on the front page of your Money section Oct. 25 by John Hall, titled "The Corps vision for the Industrial Canal," and a second article by Mr. Hall Nov. 7, titled "Changing of the guard."

One can only wonder why each time a story is published in The Times-Picayune on the proposed Industrial Canal lock replacement plan, only the vision of the Port of New Orleans and the Army Corps of Engineers is cited.

As a concerned citizen, founder of the Holy Cross Community Development Corporation, business owner and property owner-resident of the Holy Cross Neighborhood, I can assure you that the vision of the more than 45,000 people who live and work in the four-mile footprint of this proposed project is very different.

This lock replacement plan is being submitted for approval despite the resounding voice of the majority of stake holders who have stated again and again and again, "We don't want this project in our neighborhoods!"

This proposal is being sub-

mitted for approval despite the congressional mandate that all concerned parties have a voice at the decision-making table, which has not been achieved to date. This proposal is being submitted for approval despite the facts listed below.

▶ Never has a construction project of this magnitude been proposed in a fully developed urban community. Once approved, the property value of homes, businesses and institutions in the footprint of this project would be zero for at least a decade. Attempting to manage a household located in the middle of a construction site would be next to impossible.

▶ The maritime industry stands to gain increased profits of minimally \$1 million a day when the project is completed, but taxpayer dollars will underwrite the so-called "mitigation plan." There's no equity in that.

When viewed on a cost-benefit basis, the maritime industry makes the money while the communities affected, in addition to paying the cost of the project, must suffer the consequences noted below.

▶ The so-called "benefits" of a mitigation plan offered to the communities affected in the amount of some \$30 million worth of "community projects" would not justify such costs to residents as decreases in property values, traffic congestion, noise and disruption of lifestyles.

▶ Why devastate the three fully developed communities of Holy Cross, Bywater and the Lower Ninth Ward for the benefit of private industry?

▶ Finally, why spend \$30 million of taxpayers' money on so-called mitigation efforts at the Industrial Canal site when the mitigation cost at the Violet site would be only \$1 million and the same results could be achieved?

Could the fact that the majority of property owners in the footprint of this proposed project are low- and moderate-income African-Americans have something to do with the targeting of this area as opposed to the Violet site?

Rudolph L. Muse  
President,  
Holy Cross Community  
Development Corp.

# The Times-Picayune

ASHTON PHELPS

Chairman of the Board 1967-1983

Issued daily by The Times-Picayune Publishing Corp. at  
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Associate Editor, News

## YOUR OPINIONS | Letters

### Corps answers criticism of Industrial Canal plan

**New Orleans**

Re: the Nov. 28 letter from Rudolph L. Muse on the Industrial Canal Lock Replacement Study.

Mr. Muse, a 9th Ward resident involved in the discussions regarding the proposal for replacing the Industrial Canal lock for several years, made a number of comments that may reflect some misconceptions in the community about the work proposed at the lock. I would like to correct some of those assertions and advocate continued dialogue among the many people and organizations involved in this proposed project.

The "draft" evaluation report for this study was submitted to our headquarters in Washington to provide them the opportunity to ensure that it reflects current federal policies and obtain their approval to release the draft report to the public for the official coordination period. After this period, the final report will be submitted with a recommendation that would reflect the views and comments of all concerned parties.

It is incorrect to say that all concerned parties have not had a voice in the formulation of the plans for this proposed project. We and the Port of New Orleans have worked closely with a neighborhood working group composed of local residents, representatives of the neighborhood associations and community development corporations in the area, local elected officials, the Regional Planning Commission, and city of New Orleans officials. This group has been meeting off and on since August 1991, with Mr. Muse being an active participant since that time.

The views and suggestions of this group concerning the mitigation plan for this project are an

working group developed the basic plan for mitigation required to offset the impacts the project will have on the area. A similar group was formed with the navigation interests. So as you can see, all concerned parties have been involved in the process, contrary to Mr. Muse's assertions. And we have made the commitment to continue this process if the project is approved in Washington.

Much of our recent effort has gone specifically toward ensuring that the project as proposed will not devastate the three fully developed communities of Holy Cross, Bywater and the Lower 9th Ward. Construction of the lock replacement will occur primarily in the existing Industrial Canal between the levee/floodwall protection system, except for the construction of the St. Claude Avenue Bridge, which will be limited to the footprint of the existing bridge and approach ramps.

No residences will have to be relocated to accommodate the construction of the project. The proposed project will still impact the areas around the Industrial Canal and that is what the measures in the mitigation plan will help offset.

The combination of the community improvement features of the mitigation plan, which includes provisions for increased police and ambulance services, and the construction of the new bridges at St. Claude, Claiborne and Florida Avenue (the latter to be constructed by the State of Louisiana and the Port of New Orleans) should have a positive impact on property values.

And implementation of portions of the mitigation plan coincident with the initiation of construction, if not before construction, will help maintain

that may occur strictly as a result of the construction of this project.

Mr. Muse is also confused regarding the project's costs and benefits. Our economic studies indicate that the navigation industry and the national economy will experience benefits of about \$350,000 a day on the average when this project is completed, not the \$1 million that Mr. Muse believes. Also, navigation interests including the Port of New Orleans will be paying about 56 percent of the total cost of the proposed plan, including 50 percent of the mitigation costs. The Corps of Engineers will be paying for the remaining 44 percent, including the other 50 percent of the mitigation plan. So the maritime industry is paying its fair share of the mitigation plan, as directed by the Congress of the United States.

Finally, the Violet site was eliminated from consideration in 1991 when, in accordance with federal policies, we concluded that the Violet site was environmentally unacceptable even though that site was economically and engineeringly feasible. To suggest that the current lock is being proposed to be replaced at the existing lock site, rather than at the Violet site, because the majority of the residents near the current lock site are African-American is irresponsible and absolutely incorrect.

The neighborhoods around the Industrial Lock, the city, the metropolitan area and the State of Louisiana can all benefit from the proposed mitigation plan and lock replacement. We urge the community to gain a better understanding of the proposal as we continue to work with all stakeholders to produce a "win-win" solution for this matter.

**Kenneth H. Clow**  
Colonel

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## YOUR OPINIONS | Letters

### Many object to Industrial Canal expansion plan

**New Orleans**

We have read in *The Times-Picayune* several times of the fears — and implied ignorance — of "some" residents who oppose the Army Corps of Engineers draft proposal for expanding the Industrial Canal. In fact, many people are opposed to the project, and this opposition is based not on unfounded fears but on outrage rooted in awareness. In that number is unanimous opposition from the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association and the Holy Cross Community Development Corp.

What we have found is that this project proposes changes so radical as to threaten our community's fundamental health, for which no compensation can be made.

What can compensate us for deepening the channel of a barge canal so that massive container ships of unknown cargoes and Bright Fields can loom high above us? We well remember Tremé, and will not accept an "1-10 of the water" to devastate its lasting path here.

What can compensate a neighborhood for erection of an ugly concrete-and-steel seawall in exchange for an open levee with magnificent views where children run and people congregate to watch the sunsets?

What can compensate for the loss of the historic St. Claude Bridge, locks and old oaks that link us with the rest of the historic city?

What can compensate for years of noise, vibration, dust and incredible traffic problems, plus additional construction traffic, while already crowded bridges are eliminated? And how soon is another updating of this project set to visit our neighborhoods with resident flight and plummeting residential property values?

What can compensate for isolating us further from escape while increasing our vulnerability to chemical threats and other emergencies?

What can compensate for an ill-conceived linear waterborne transportation plan that co-opts

the revitalization of precious historic neighborhoods in a city that lives on its history?

What can compensate for the corps' failure to repair the immense continuing ravaging of wetlands and livelihoods already caused by the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, of which this project is an integral part? Water from this project 32 years ago engulfed this neighborhood purposefully during Hurricane Betsy without so much as an apology, and still threatens us during storms and high water.

We are also not encouraged by the actions of the port and corps planners to slide this project through with little of the notice they swore to give this community. The only official hearing will be Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. in the Holy Cross Gym.

It is the comprehension of the many, not the baseless fears of the few, that condemns this project.

**John Koester**

Chairperson,

Holy Cross Neighborhood

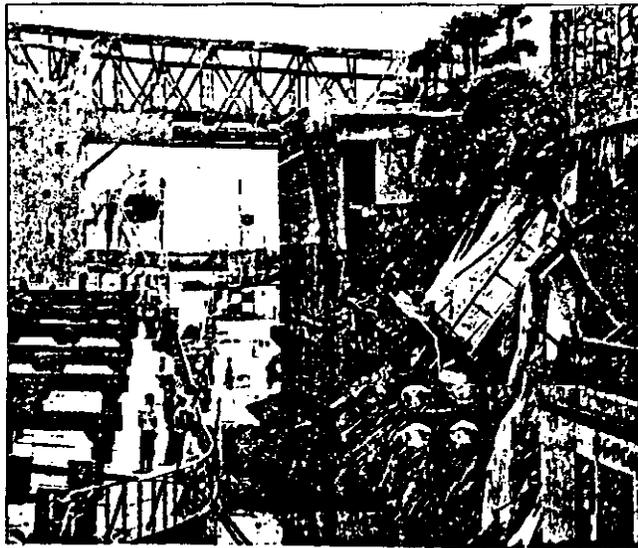
Association

DECEMBER 22, 1996

\$1.50

DISASTER ON THE RIVERFRONT

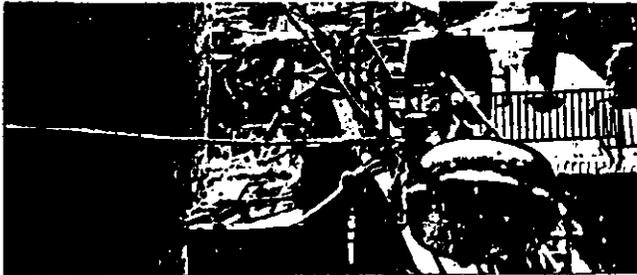
## BUILT IN HARM'S WAY



Beneath the feet of passing tourists on the New Orleans riverfront is a solid concrete wall that marks the end of land and the beginning of water. Only one significant riverfront development disregards that line: the Riverwalk/Hilton Riverside Hotel complex, smashed by a freighter eight days ago. As developers rush to rebuild, some warn that it's time to pull back onto solid ground.

By COLEMAN WARNER  
*Staff writer*

Fifteen years ago, as architects for the 1984 world's fair toyed with the idea of building pavilions on Mississippi River barges tied up alongside the fair site, port director Edward Reed pitched a fit about the threat posed by passing river traffic.



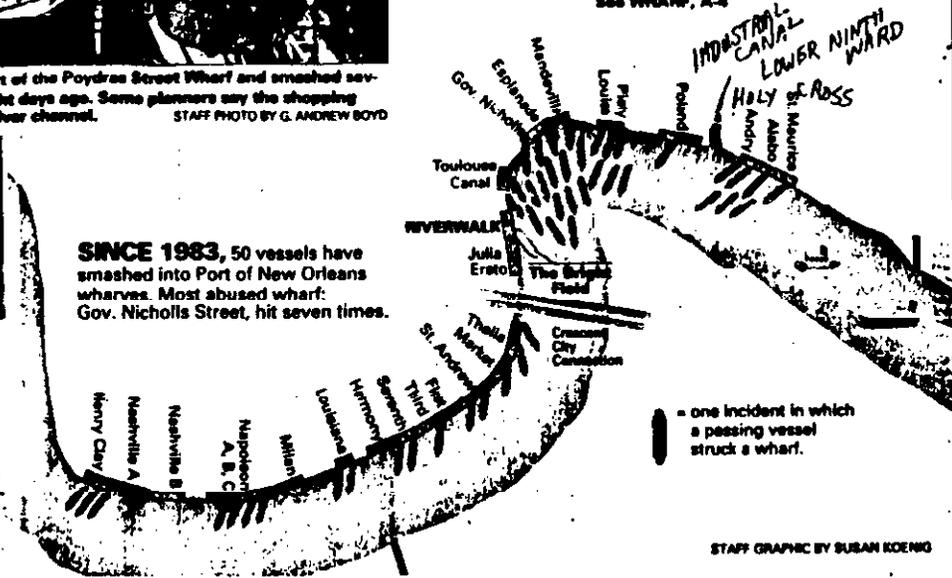
The Bright Field devastated part of the Poydras Street Wharf and smashed several stores in the Riverwalk eight days ago. Some planners say the shopping center is built too far into the river channel. STAFF PHOTO BY G. ANDREW BOYD



### A DANGEROUS PASSAGE

The Bright Field taught New Orleansians the dangers of mixing people with shipping. But those who pilot the giant vessels through the city have long known the river's treacheries. See A-4

SINCE 1983, 50 vessels have smashed into Port of New Orleans wharves. Most abused wharf: Gov. Nicholls Street, hit seven times.



were "playing with people's lives in a most careless manner." Reed's concerns, echoing those long held by river pilots, led to an informal practice of discouraging development of pedestrian-heavy attractions on the portion of wharf that extends beyond the riverbank. "This appears to offer a realistic margin of protection," Reed wrote in 1986, a year after his retirement. But in establishing that safety guideline, one glaring

See A-10  
Ship registry rules may thwart safety.  
See F-1

STAFF GRAPHIC BY SUSAN KOENIG

# Toy story: Giveaway evokes 8,500 smiles

By BRUCE NOLAN  
Staff writer



the boxes of dolls and gleamed on chromed toy motorcycles. Doll houses and model airplanes beckoned



Kathleen Kraus  
679 Jourdan Ave  
New Orleans, LA 70117

District Engineer  
CELMNM-2D  
P.O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

I am writing this because I am afraid. I am afraid of what will happen to the Holy Cross neighborhood if you choose to begin construction on the canal. The Holy Cross is a neighborhood like no other in the city. I moved here only a year and a half ago and felt so welcome I bought a house right down the street in September. I know neighbors five and eight blocks away, as well as everyone on my block. There is a sense of peace and history about this place. Several of my neighbors have lived here their entire lives. If the canal project goes through, many of these neighbors have already told me they would leave; be it due to the noise, hassle, or safety. The renters would definitely all move, leaving most of the houses vacant. We all are aware of the amount of crime, drugs, and danger involved in areas of high vacancy. Some, such as myself, would be unable to leave and would be left to deal with the fear and dangers of this once friendly neighborhood turned looting bin. I would be afraid to leave my house, and afraid to come home if away. A life in constant fear is not a life.

This area of the levee, around the lower 9th ward, is the only area where you can walk in the grass and watch the boats. People bring their children from all over the city to fish and play along the levee each day after school. This is the only safe outdoor experience many of these kids have. Please don't take it away.

I also fear the rebuilding of the canal on another level, besides my immediate safety and quality of life. This fear is the deepening of the canal. Many statements were made during the hearing about Hurricane Betsy and how the canal waters reacted to the hurricanes. I fear the increased amount of water force in the IHC would be a danger to all the surrounding communities.

I chose the Holy Cross area as my home for it's peaceful and friendly nature which is so rare in cities these days. I feel that the atmosphere is as much a part of it's historic nature as the architecture, perhaps even more so as it becomes more rare. To disturb this area would be a great crime.

Sincerely,  
*Kathleen W Kraus*  
Kathleen W. Kraus

Para 1 - Comments noted.

Para 2 - Recreation and aesthetic features have been incorporated into the plan.

Para 3 - The hurricane protection levees were constructed subsequent to Hurricane Betsy.

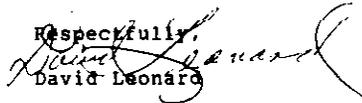
2127 St. Maurice Avenue  
New Orleans, La. 70117  
March 2, 1997

Colonel William L. Conner  
Dept. of the Army  
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Sir,

I am writing to express my opinion regarding the Lock Replacement Project. I am in agreement with the project to this extent, 1. that the project address the issue of having the proposed high-rise accessible to residents of the Lower Ninth Ward. The high-rise is proposed for Florida Avenue.  
2. I am in favor of the project if it will provide job training, good paying wages, and meaningful employment, with preference given to residents, in this area.

Comments noted.

Respectfully,  
  
David Leonard

607 Flood Street  
New Orleans, La. 70117  
February 20, 1987

Col. William Conner  
District Engineer  
Army Corp of Engineers  
7500 Prytanis  
New Orleans, La.

Dear Col. Conner:

When a barge hit the Claiborne Ave. bridge, the court declared the Dock Board neither owns the bridge nor were they responsible for protecting it. Now the Corp of Engineers wants to undertake another construction project for Dock Board replacing the St. Claude bridge with a high rise. Those of us who live in the neighborhood and who must use this bridge are expected to endure for ten years during this project. If another accident occurs, we, the tax payers may have to bear the burden.

The scheme to widen the industrial canal already has a corrosive effect. The threat of this project is eroding the value of the adjacent properties and will ruin us as a neighborhood. Just the shadow of this scheme has repelled potential home owners and prevented this historic neighborhood from attaining economic recovery. Furthermore, I don't believe that the St. Claude bridge is prone to malfunction, it is usually the only one working. We do not need a new bridge.

Other sites for the locks are possible but the Dock Board wants here. Active members of the maritime industry serve on the New Orleans Dock Board because of an exemption in the ethics code. It is the only port authority in the state that allows such an exemption. The members of the Holy Cross neighborhood have negotiated in good faith with the Corp of Engineers but the Corp continues to force this issue over our protests.

Your predecessor Col. Colv predicted benefits of \$350,000 daily in for the navigation industry. The \$30,000 as mitigation tactic is completely self serving and, since the strategy will pay for itself in under 100 days, it's not even a fair offer.

Yours truly,

*Linda Michon*  
Linda Michon

CC: Sen. John Breaux, Sen. Mary Landrieu

Paragraph 1. The current plan is to replace the St. Claude bridge with a low-rise bridge, not a high-rise. A temporary bridge will allow the needed construction activity to take place without roadside vehicular outages.

Paragraph 3. The choice of locating the proposed lock at its current location was made because it is best from both economic and environmental standpoints.

Paragraph 4. The mitigation plan contains \$33 million worth of activities, not \$30,000.

February 23, 1997

Mr. Conner  
P.O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, LA 70160

Dear Mr. Conner,

Thank you for getting an extension on the expansion of the Industrial Canal Project which includes Claiborne St. and St. Claude Avenue bridges. I will get right to the point of my letter.

First, I extremely object to the lower level bridge that is planned for St. Claude Avenue at this time. We are coming into the 21st Century with a model bridge that will be obsolete before it started. This is the same style bridge that is there now and it should have been replaced 35 years ago. Not even a small vessel will be able to go through this bridge without it opening. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE OTHER THAN PUTTING A HIGHER BRIDGE AT THIS LOCATION IS TO PUT A HIGH RISE BRIDGE OVER THE FLORIDA AVENUE BRIDGE THAT WOULD TIE INTO I-510 AND WOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR HEAVY LARGE SHIP TRAFFIC.

Second, I strongly object to the dumping of ANY waste dredged from the Industrial Canal being dumped into any area of St. Bernard Parish. Since the revenue from this project will be going to Orleans Parish, they should get the dredged mud also. Orleans Parish has the New Orleans East area, dump it there. Or maybe there is a location on the West Bank. But St. Bernard Parish doesn't want it no matter how low the level of contamination.

Whenever a project is planned for lower New Orleans, the St. Bernard Parish area generally gets the short end of the stick. IT IS TIME WE HAVE A POLITICIAN WHO WILL STAND UP FOR WHAT IS BEST FOR ST. BERNARD PARISH.

Yours truly,



Para 2. The proposed low rise bridge at St. Claude Avenue was a compromise agreed on while working with the neighborhood working group. It meets the needs of the project as designed.

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. It has been assumed that a new bridge there is in part of without project condition. In addition, a temporary bridge at St. Claude Avenue has been included with the same lane capacity as the existing bridge, thereby eliminating the need to close that bridge during construction. Only a couple of weeks closure will be required at Claiborne Avenue by using innovative construction methods.

Para 3. The limits of the disposal area have been refined and all material will be placed in existing disposal areas in Orleans Parish.

Kathy Muse  
4816 Royal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70117

February 28, 1997

District Engineer  
CELNMW-PD  
P. O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Re: Widening of the Industrial Canal  
& Lock Replacement

To Whom It Should Concern:

I am a homeowner as well as business owner in the Holy Cross Neighborhood adjacent to the Industrial Canal. My husband and I moved to this area because of its proximity to the river with its wide open natural grass levee and pastoral setting - a quiet oasis in an urban environment. Just this morning I walked along the river and watched the fog chase itself across the levee. Peaceful, serene, special, unique and certainly worth preserving! We raised our teenaged daughter here, restored our home to its original splendor and started what is now a thriving business.

I am adamantly opposed to the widening of the Industrial Canal. The need for a new lock and wider canal to facilitate waterborne commerce is not in question - the need to accomplish this end at the Industrial Canal site is!!! A construction project of this size and duration in the midst of a heavily populated, residential area will have an irreversible effect on our community. It would severely erode our quality of life and level of health and safety; render our property values null and void; decrease and/or eradicate our business income; and bring to a screeching halt our ongoing neighborhood revitalization!

If Congress (as it has been known to do) does authorize this nonsensical project, my concerns are many:

- 1) Has a construction project of this magnitude ever been accomplished in such a heavily populated urban area? If so, where? When? What was the resulting effect on the vibrancy of that community? What was the impact socially, economically and environmentally? Was there a mitigation plan and was it carried out?
- 2) Have you established a concrete, graphic time line to illustrate the beginning and end of each stage of this project with exact dates?

1. Large scale projects in urban areas are not unheard of. Right here in the New Orleans area, the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection project has been under construction since the mid-1960s. Other projects have been constructed, or are under construction, in phases like Dallas, Chicago, and Kansas City. In some instances yes. No other project has mitigation to the extent that this project does.

2. No. The time line will become solidified when Congress approves the project and appropriates money for construction.

- 3) Have you considered the growth in population and its effect on traffic flow during this project?
- 4) How will the traffic congestion be alleviated?
- 5) Have you consulted with police, fire and medical facilities about access to cur neighborhoods in cases of emergency? Has a plan been devised to insure immediate, life-saving, unhindered response?
- 6) Have you consulted with emergency evacuation agencies to devise a plan for evacuation of all of St. Bernard and the Lower Ninth Ward utilizing only one bridge in the event of a hurricane?
- 7) It is suggested in your video that the St. Claude Bridge has broken down a lot and is in need of replacement. In the 19 years that I have lived in this neighborhood, I can only remember a few occasions when the bridge has been closed for routine maintenance. How many times has the St. Claude Bridge actually been closed due to malfunctioning?
- 8) Will the proposed Florida Avenue Bridge actually be built prior to the start of construction? Will it be connected to the I-510?
- 9) What plan has been devised to deal with the continued (and I'm sure increased due to this project) erosion of the MRGO Canal?
- 10) What toxic substances lie at the bottom of the Industrial Canal which may be disturbed during construction and pose a safety hazard to our community? What plan is in place to deal with such a hazard?
- 11) Is there a threat of breaks in the levee as a result of construction and heavy equipment?
- 12) With the advent of deep draft shipping after the widening of the Canal, what is to prevent another "Riverwalk" disaster in our own backyard?
- 13) Will the magnificent oak trees be replaced if they die after transplanting? Is transplanting really feasible?
- 14) Why does a flood wall have to be constructed? Flood walls obscure the view of the river and the access thereto, attract graffiti, trash and crime. Is there an alternative which would retain the natural earthen levee?

3. Yes

4, 5 and 6. The result of the public review process, the plan was changed to include into the plan a temporary bidge at St. Claude Avenue and innovative construction techniques at Claiborne Avenue. This will minimize impacts to traffic.

7. The Port of New Orleans owns the bridge and statistics are not readily available.

8. Construction on the railroad bridge at Florida Avenue is scheduled to begin in 1997. There is no schedule for the proposed high-rise or connecting roadway to I-510.

9. MR-GO erosion is not being addressed in this report.

10. Studies have indicated that no dangerous levels of toxic material exist in the cana.

11. No.

12. Deep draft traffic through the canal will operate at slow speeds with tug assistance. Therefore, the chance for a riverwalk type accident is extremely remote.

13. Yes.  
Yes.

14. In order to retain the earthen levees, hours would have to be reevaluated in order to set the levee back. A "fold-down" flood wall has been incorporated into the plan. For all but less than one month out of each year (on average), the wall will be horizontal and out of sight. This wall is planned for areas along the canal that currently has only. This will allow for an unobstructed view of the river.

15) How will landlords be compensated for loss of rental income as tenants move to other areas of the city due to this project's inconvenience and health and safety issues?

16) How will owners who wish to sell their property be compensated when they cannot sell due to reduction in property values and health and safety issues created by this project?

17) How will the community be compensated for the damage already done to its development by the cloud of uncertainty created by this proposed project?

18) How can you even think of causing such upheaval in the lives of so many people?

Seek another, more viable location for this project and we'll all win!

Hoping for rational thought to prevail, I am waiting...



Kathy Muse

15. Specific details of compensation will be determined when the implementation plan is developed by the community based partnering agreement.

16 and 17. Studies indicate that there are no health and safety issues created by the project.

We have recognized the perception of local residents that real estate values have been negatively impacted and have considered that in formulating the final mitigation plan..

18. The revised construction plan including a temporary bridge at St. Claude and innovative construction of the Claiborne Avenue bridge will minimize the disruption to the community.

WLS  
JWC  
1/23/97

February 23, 1997

Mr. Connér  
.O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, LA 70150

Dear MR. Corner,

Thank you for getting an extension on the expansion of the Industrial Canal Project which includes Claiborne St. and St. Claude Avenue bridges. I will get right to the point of my letter.

First, I extremely object to the lower level bridge that is planned for St. Claude Avenue at this time. We are coming into the 21st Century with a model bridge that will be obsolete before it started. This is the same style bridge that is there now and it should have been replaced 35 years ago. Not even a small vessel will be able to go through this bridge without it opening. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE OTHER THAN PUTTING A HIGHER BRIDGE AT THIS LOCATION IS TO PUT A HIGH RISE BRIDGE OVER THE FLORIDA AVENUE BRIDGE THAT WOULD TIE INTO I-510 AND WOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR HEAVY LARGE SHIP TRAFFIC.

Second, I strongly object to the dumping of ANY waste dredged from the Industrial Canal being dumped into any area of St. Bernard Parish. Since the revenue from this project will be going to Orleans Parish, they should get the dredged mud also. Orleans Parish has the New Orleans East area, dump it there. Or maybe there is a location on the West Bank. But St. Bernard Parish doesn't want it no matter how low the level of contamination.

Whenever a project is planned for lower New Orleans, the St. Bernard Parish area generally gets the short end of the stick. IT IS TIME WE HAVE A POLITICIAN WHO WILL STAND UP FOR WHAT IS BEST FOR ST. BERNARD PARISH.

Yours truly,

*M. Thomas Ohlsen*  
*Patricia Ohlsen*  
M. Thomas and Patricia Ohlsen  
8501 Benjamin St.  
Chalmette, LA 70043

Para 2. The proposed low rise bridge at St. Claude Avenue was a compromise agreed on while working with the neighborhood working group. It meets the needs of the project as designed.

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. It has been assumed that a new bridge there is in part of without project condition. In addition, a temporary bridge at St. Claude Avenue has been included with the same lane capacity as the existing bridge, thereby eliminating the need to close that bridge during construction. Only a couple of weeks closure will be required at Claiborne Avenue by using innovative construction methods.

Para 3. The limits of the disposal area have been refined and all material will be placed in existing disposal areas in Orleans Parish.

February 23, 1997

Mr. Conner  
P.O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, LA 70160

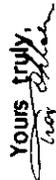
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Yours truly,  
  
Troy and Denise Ohlsen  
3116 Mayflower Dr.  
Meraux, LA 70075

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Para 3. The limits of the disposal area have been refined and all material will be placed in existing disposal areas in Orleans Parish.

Chalmette, La.  
Feb. 22, 1937

District Engineer  
CLEMIN-PD  
P.O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, LA  
70160-0267

Gentlemen,

This is in reference to the proposed replacement of the inner harbor navigation industrial canal lock.

I understand the high level bridge at Florida Avenue is already in the Louisiana state's plans. Hopefully, they are planning for the highway to extend to Paris Road in Chalmette, LA. (note: This has been in the state's plan since before the WPA days.)

The intercostal waterway barge traffic is increasing all the time, which will mean the St. Claude Avenue low level bridge will have to be raised more often and for a longer time. About 50 years ago, before the Clatborne Avenue bridge was built, almost every candidate for state governor promised a tunnel under the industrial canal at St. Claude Avenue. If it was possible to build a tunnel 50 years ago----why not now? During the building of the tunnel, there would be no delay in traffic, as they could use the St. Claude Avenue neutral ground as excess to the building of the tunnel. A high level bridge would be acceptable at St. Claude Avenue, but would be more inconvenient while constructing.

There are tunnels under the intercostal waterways at the Harvey and Algiers canals. (It was possible to build a tunnel to cross the English Channel.) These two canals join together further west. The Harvey Canal locks are used for barge traffic going east down river with the current to the industrial canal. The Algiers Canal locks are used for barges going west down river from the industrial canal. The Mississippi River's current plays havoc to barge traffic.

I WOULD RECOMMEND PUTTING A TUNNEL AT ST. CLAUDE AVE.; LEAVE THE PRESENT LOCKS; BUILD THE NEW LOCKS (ON SITE) NEXT TO THE PRESENT LOCKS ON THE EAST SIDE. THIS WOULD ALLOW 2-WAY BARGE TRAFFIC AND WHEN REPAIRS ARE NEEDED, BARGE TRAFFIC WOULD ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE (LIKE THE PANAMA CANAL). THERE WOULD BE NO COSTLY NEED TO MOVE THE COAST GUARD FACILITY NOR ANY RESIDENTS. USE THE \$3 MILLION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO HELP THE STATE FINANCE THE HIGH-LEVEL FLORIDA AVE. BRIDGE. KEEP THE INDUSTRIAL CANAL AS A NATIONAL INTERCOSTAL WATERWAY.

Early in our planning studies, we considered a tunnel at St. Claude, but ruled it out as being unfeasible. The project is being proposed to accommodate deep draft vessels, which would require tunnels under the Industrial Canal to be very deep, unlike the Harvey and Belle Chasse tunnels.

We previously investigated a site for the replacement lock east of and adjacent to the existing lock and found it to be totally devastating to the local areas around the existing lock. We eliminated that site from further study.

THIS WOULD BE LESS COSTLY TO THE AMERICAN TAX PAYERS, LESS TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, AND LESS INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC AND THEIR SAFETY.

As for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, it was a mistake from the start. The Corps of Engineers knew before it was built. It was all a political play to give additional wharfage for the Port of New Orleans. Claims were that it would help St. Bernard Parish, but it has only caused more flooding and destruction. It did not really save ship traffic time as promised. In addition, the salt water coming up the canal has destroyed the trees and marshes that were a natural breakwater for the protection of New Orleans & St. Bernard citizens. Even the Red Cross will no longer maintain shelters in New Orleans during Hurricane season.

Only the Mississippi River should be used for the large ship traffic. There is plenty wharfage space in St. Bernard & Plaquemine Parishes that ships can unload to railroads & trucking saving time. There is no need to place large ship facilities anywhere else but on the river. The nation's tax payer's money could be saved, along with there safety and inconvenience.

KEEP THE INDUSTRIAL CANAL AS PART OF THE INTERCOSTAL WATERWAY SYSTEM; CLOSE MRGO AND USE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FOR LARGE SHIPS TRAFFICING.

Sincerely,



Henry P. Ponstein  
3511 Paris Road  
Chalmette, LA 70043  
504-271-4927

CC: Senator John Breaux  
Senator Trent Lott  
Congressman Billy Tauzin  
Congressman Bob Livingston

We are not addressing the closure of the MR-GO in this report.

3/27/97

Dear Sir,

I am writing regarding plans by the Corp to build new bridges at St. Claude, Claiborne, and Fondouck, for the purpose of expanding the Canal from the Mississippi River to the Intracoastal Canal.

First, might I say I am strongly against this project! This is not a project that is needed. It is a case of "Big Business" overpowering the needs and well-being of the people living in the affected areas (I'll leave it to you, Collins and the residents of St. Bernard Parish).

If I remember correctly the Corp. plans for dredging the Pearl River was a project the Corp. proposed.

This was another project that was not needed and if not for public outcry would have happened. It was also a "social interest" issue.

If the Corp. cannot find needed projects that help protect our city and state, they should cease to exist or have a huge budget cut! All of the projects that have been mentioned in the past, several of them have more to do with keeping the Corp. employed, rather than the needs and well-being of the people.

Expansion of the Canal is one again a special interest issue (Big Business) not for the well-being of the people. Being a member of the New Orleans Audubon Society, New Orleans, I know how much the existing bridges are relied upon. No compensation is enough for the inconvenience to the residents in the proposed construction areas. I thank you for your time and like the old saying goes "If it's not broke don't fix it!"

Sincerely,  
Charles Hunter

The Industrial Canal Lock, built in 1923, is the busiest lock in the entire Inland Navigation Waterway System. Delays to marine traffic have averaged about 10 hours, with many instances of 24-36 hour delays during high river conditions. These delays mean higher transportation costs for the cargo being shipped through the lock, which in turn means higher costs to the general public. The lock is too small for today's marine traffic. It is the No. 2 priority lock replacement project in the nation, according to the Inland Waterway Users Board.



Dear Col. Connor,

We oppose the bridge project for a number of reasons already stated to you such as the bridge being up for longer periods due to increased marine traffic; more hazardous materials transported through the canal and mostly because the St. Claude bridge has been the "most dependable" of all bridges and we feel it is a waste of taxpayers money!

Comments noted.

Sincerely,  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Quintine  
6730 Douglas St.  
Arabi, LA 70032

Dear Cal Conner,  
We do not want any  
interference with our  
lives and ability to  
get to our jobs just  
to make jobs for the  
Corp. of Engineers.  
Go elsewhere!

Comments noted.

Sincerely,  
Billy + Denise Rubin  
449 Esteban St.  
Arabi, LA 70032

2/23/97

Re: M. P. Story  
4709 N. Lampart St  
H.O. Ca. 90117

To whom it may concern,

I apologize for the lateness & condition of my comments. I attended the 1/21/97 public meeting. Say I had some comments in the rough prior to the meeting & added to them during the meeting.

I had every intention of editing & typing this - but due to circumstances beyond my control I was unable to.

I had eye surgery 1/21/97 (w/ complications) & was on strict bed rest for several weeks (cutg work), then upon returning to work I had so much "catching up to do".

I hope you are able to understand my writing. ~~What~~ was done w/ eye.

Anyway I also hope you receive this on time as it is very important to me - to all of us in my area that each voice be heard.

Also please forgive me if anything I've written was done so with a "Rude Edge". It's not directed @ anyone - in particular - I realize you are paid to do a job just as the rest of us are. But this is a truly emotional issue for me.

I feel like a MAD mother bear protecting her cubs.

As it is my life has already been stippled

From Mary Henry Stroy  
4706 71. Rampart St  
M.D. La. 70117  
945-1196 or 8385-240

8657121  
Comments on widening  
Locks project.

15th Comment Re. Film.

Film notate out (the community voice has  
been heard & taken into consideration.

If our org. isn't fully heard & taken into consideration  
there would be no further discussion as you would  
have heard "We don't want the project here"  
(Asbrc. Holy Cross neighborhood)

We find here (Holy Cross neighborhood) for 18 yrs.  
I've felt safe all this time. We have a way of a land  
neighborhood, by our neighbors having a special  
bond to each other & this neighborhood. Many of us  
have shared in spite of comments from the  
"other side". Relatives of office employees, for the most part,  
have not been here for long. Many of our friends & family  
they are not living here - experiencing what we've  
experienced. We could have moved many times - chose to stay as  
did the rest of us. We migrated to this community here  
of it's quiet, quiet, peace.

This project would change only after the state  
opening. We did not stay here to get on projects  
opening parts or to avoid outside law, door to view  
a 4 1/2 acre site retaining 2.5 (which will

ultimately be a 1000 sq ft (14.1) not would we see  
the 4 1/2 acre site for longer, parts are moving on the way as  
adapting to the future of our lives.

New ideas are transplant a 7500 old oak tree  
& what would it's survival rate be?

Yes - when you 15th comment this project

Page 1, paragraph 4. A "fold-down" floodwall has been incorporated into the plan. For at  
but less than one month out of each year (on average), the wall will be horizontal and out of sight.  
This wall is planned for areas along the canal that currently has only levees. The impact to  
businesses such as Holy Cross has been greatly diminished by incorporation of a temporary bridge  
at St. Claude and reductions of the outage of Claiborne to only a few weeks.

D

6/3

★  
see  
#4  
P1

study several years ago, our area was very depressed - Property values going down, people moving away, blighted houses everywhere - no new renters or buyers!  
 Fortunately most who left were transients. We (The die hards) stayed; we who stayed - not because it was affordable (as it was known as a low rent area) but because we loved this area because of its specialness. You may compare it to loving a person because of all their special, endearing traits (even tho they're different - they're off the beaten path.) If that person were to change in a way that the things you loved were no longer a part of their being, you'd be very unhappy. Especially if you were bound to stay w/ them for reasons beyond your control.

This is what your project would do to us. Our relationships w/ these unhappy - thus changed - neighbors - our relationship w/ our neighborhood & community.

"As for ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> mitigation ~~cost~~ - \$33 mil. is not a drop in the bucket compared to ~~the~~ the losses the community would incur. It's a piece of dust in the wind. Are you all in a dream world or do you think we are?"

A 500 thousand for Holy Cross school! Absurd! The doors to Holy Cross will close if this project goes thru. As it is some students <sup>commuting</sup> w/ bus from the west side must leave @ 6pm to get to school on time (for buses due to bridge opening up is not a legit. excuse.) ~~Full bridge out - for~~

(3)

study remains @ N.C. school - whole families lives  
be disrupted - work schedules adjusted - people  
getting up extra early - leaving earlier to get kids  
to school & to work on time.

Prayer  
and  
prayer  
and  
prayer



~~Since you~~ Fortunately we have a strong  
 neighborhood assoc. who has responsibility for  
 attaining our Local & Nat. Historic Status, we  
 have now a housing development corp. which has been  
 responsible for attaining & maintaining height laws  
 which are now easier occupied. Our neighborhood is  
 rising, developing in its own Nat. way. We have  
 kept it moving back. Many artists, musicians, writers  
 have discovered or rediscovered this area. ~~These friends~~  
 Newcomer's friends who would never have thought to  
 come into this part of it were not to visit friends  
 here ~~in the~~ now having some & don't believe what  
 they see - what they experience & ~~not~~ ultimately  
 end up moving here. The word is out - "Hear."  
 Let me know you & see a house for rent or sale,  
~~the~~ People on the side with great new faces  
 pouring thru - they're warmly greeted, many times  
 with stories about the area & they desire - come  
 back to visit - y. not to stay.  
 People pass thru admiring the lush vegetation -  
 & we know no one who has not opened cuttings  
 or if all is down because of the freeze - we're  
 sure to say please take a spin when it's  
 green.  
 This is a special place!  
 We're on the way - to ~~see~~ do this project  
 here would be devastating - No one would

5

rent or buy - There are so many who are here would  
be forced to move - Yes, years down the  
road the neighborhood will, may or may  
not start over again (all over) but the magic  
will be gone. Haven't commuted from all over  
enough of the world's magic? too much?

~~There is no more magic of spirits~~

My son, all I have to say to my name to  
have my son, he ~~is not~~ his home in this  
neighborhood which he was born into & lives. He  
would not want to & would not be able to  
live of the change & where would he be able  
to go to get what he has at an affordable  
price.

What will you ~~do~~ do for persons who are  
dealing physical & mental problems if they  
stay to survive the noise, dust, the stress.

Please don't let the magic disappear -  
to see what it may be like living in the  
constant noise / stress -

We don't want it.

Sincerely  
Mary Patsy Story

February 20, 1997

Colonel William L. Conner  
Dept of the Army  
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Sir,

My name is Marietta Williams, and I am a resident of the Lower Ninth Ward, residing at 6116 N. Roman Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70117.

Please find written the issues that I expressed verbally, at the meeting, held at Holy Cross School, on January 27, 1997, regarding the Lock Replacement Project.

First, I feel that I can support this project, if the Corps, can satisfactorily address the following issues:

1. That the Corps include in the mitigation project, monies to allow for entrances and exits to the proposed High-Rise, for Lower Ninth Ward residents. This proposed High-Rise is to come through the Lower Ninth Ward, from St. Bernard Parish. The proposed building site is on Florida Avenue. In your film, you addressed the issue of the High-Rise, only in relation to St. Bernard Parish, calling it a By-pass, and proposing to use roughly \$8.5 million dollars, of the \$33 million dollars, for this purpose. In my opinion, this is a very serious safety issue for residents of the Lower Ninth Ward, as well, because we are currently landlocked, on all sides by "draw-bridges", and as you might well understand, should an evacuation crisis arise during the span of years, that this project is in effect, that such an event could prove disastrous for residents of this area.

I understand that you do not have a direct connection to the High-Rise, however, in light of the fact that you address the issue in the film indicates that it is an issue. I am requesting that you expand that plan of the proposed By-Pass/High-Rise, to include access to Lower Ninth Ward residents for entrances ON AND OFF of the High-Rise that are in the Lower Ninth Ward, and connects to the rest of the city. This access to the High-Rise would prevent our having to depend just on draw-bridges, for entering and leaving the area. Access from our area to the High-Rise should be one of the long lasting and permanent effects of this lock widening project, for the residents of this area. Possible sites for entrances and exits can be Tupelo St. and Caffin Ave. When I write of this area, I include the entire area that is below the bridge to the St. Bernard Parish line.

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. It has been assumed that a new bridge there is in part of without project condition. In addition, a temporary bridge at St. Claude Avenue has been included with the same lane capacity as the existing bridge thereby eliminating the need to close that bridge during construction. Only a couple of weeks closure will be required at Claiborne Avenue by using innovative construction methods.

2. That you implement in your planning some concrete information regarding job training ,types of jobs that will be available to residents who qualify ,a written assurance that residents will be given a first chance at applying for contracts ,and jobs,and be hired if they meet the criteria; that some type of job training be implemented through the public school system that would allow training for students who would like to move directly into the building/construction trades, after completing high school. These workers could provide an ongoing work force for the various jobs that will need to be done.

That there be some concrete information on the number of real jobs, that will be provided, the salary ranges, the duration of the jobs, in other words, as many specifics as possible.

Should the job training include students in the high school, for some training, that preference be given to the high schools that are in the immediate area, such as Alfred Lavless Sr High, Douglas Sr. High, and Carver Sr. High, just as examples.

That monies also be set aside to train and re-train some of our hard-core "unemployables", who have a serious desire to change, and will need the extra supports in order to return to the work-force as productive workers.

3. That the Corps seriously look at the issue of Dredging, and its impact on our area, especially when the river waters rise. Will this affect our area adversely? Will the levee hold? Can waters seep under the levee system and cause it to erode beneath the surface?

This concludes my primary issues.

Second, I think that \$33 million dollars is not enough to compensate the various areas that will be impacted by this project. I think that the mitigation monies should be higher.

Third, should the government, proceed with this project, I would like to be one of the volunteers to serve on the committee for the dispensing of the funds. I would like to serve in the capacity of a resident.

Thank you for your attention to these issues, and thank you and the Corps for the public meeting(s).

Respectfully,  
  
Marietta Williams (Ms.)

The project is designed to maintain the same level of flood protection currently exists.

Marotta Williams

Comments

Report  
Book I

July 22, 1997

Book I covers the authority of the rationale behind expanding the present lock canal system.

It gives its report on how the Mississippi River and the other waterways are impacted by the present lock system.

It also discusses the impact of the waterways to the country that includes commercial trading and business by using the waterways.

The book gives the importance of our area in the national interest.

The book also covers the 7 possible sites that were considered for expansion, only the various pros and cons of each.

The book reports that site was fully evaluated down to two, with the various pros and cons regarding each site.

It discusses the desirability and feasibility of the proposed site at the State Harbor through the Canal, and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet.

The book covers, in part about  
the role in public life

Clinty water, level, about 7  
the water, water quality, hazardous,  
focus on public water, water quantity,  
projects, waterborne disease, navigation  
problems, etc.

The book also covers what  
the future of commerce and trade with  
various scenarios offered on the  
current party remain as it is,  
and on with various other changes.

Walter Williams

January 27, 1997

Shelby Wilson  
4839 Charles St.  
New Orleans, LA 70117

Gentlemen:

I am a local artist (employed by Outdoor Systems), mother of twins, and longtime resident of the Holy Cross neighborhood. We own a home on Deslonde and recently purchased a very lovely old double at Deslonde and the River.

The home and spacious yard are at the foot of the levee and command a gorgeous view of the River and surrounding levee. My children and I admired the house for years and dreamed of owning it someday. When our elderly neighbor lost his wife and, with regret, decided to leave his home and move in with his daughter, we were thrilled to be in a position to acquire it. Since that time, I have poured all of my resources, financial as well as physical and emotional, into the restoration of this fine, old home. My children, now seventeen, who were raised in this block and have memories to our neighbors and friends, often speak of raising their own families here. We have an abiding love and devotion to a neighborhood that we feel is irreplaceable, and of immeasurable value. I assure you that there are many, many others who share these feelings.

In a city where people are forced to live in appallingly close quarters and space is at such a premium, our proximity to the levee is a closely guarded treasure to us all. It has afforded us priceless hours of recreation with our families, and we are continually enriched by its beauty. It is a privilege that none of us has any intention of relinquishing. Should your plan be implemented, not only would our families be robbed of the right to enjoy our proximity to the river, but property such as mine would be rendered virtually worthless and uninhabitable.

I feel that the Holy Cross area has already suffered a crippling injustice at the hand of the Corps. Just as Bywater was reclaimed, and its property values dramatically increased, so should have been the destiny of Holy Cross. However, in spite of the many attractions that are exclusive to our area, our efforts to revitalize and attract home owners, have been continually thwarted by the sword that you hold over our heads. The uncertainty of our future, brought about by the ruthless pursuit of your agenda, has cost us dearly.

Lastly, the prospect of exposing our families to incalculable health and safety risks is totally unacceptable to us. I sincerely believe that were we anything other than a largely Black, poor, and working class neighborhood, we would not continue to be threatened by your agenda.

Thank you,

Shelby Wilson

Paragraphs 2 and 3. The revised EIS and mitigation plan reflect recognition of neighborhood group efforts. The revision increases the project's efforts to minimize disruption of neighborhood residents and business by removing all but minimal transportation outages, and by increasing and improving the mitigation scheme.

Paragraph 5. A "fold-down" floodwall has been incorporated into the plan. For all but less than one month out of each year (on average), the wall will be horizontal and out of sight. This wall is planned for areas along the canal that currently has only levees. The impact to businesses such as Holy Cross has been greatly diminished by incorporation of a temporary bridge at St. Claude and reductions of the outage of Claiborne to only a few weeks.

