



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

News Release

Public Affairs Office
504-862-2201

www.mvn.usace.army.mil

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Randy Cephus, (504) 862-1708
March 14, 2008

Corps signs Decision Record for the IHNC Individual Environmental Report

NEW ORLEANS -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District Commander, COL Alvin Lee, signed the Decision Record for Tier 1 of the Individual Environmental Report 11 here, March 14, 2008 to allow the Corps to proceed with its proposed action.

The proposed action is to design channel and/or water body structures to improve surge protection for the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal as part of the overall hurricane protection system. The Corps issued a draft of IER 11, Tier 1, for public review on Jan. 31. The 30-day public review period provided stakeholders and citizens the opportunity to comment on the proposed action.

“This is the largest design-build civil works project in the history of the Corps,” said Col. Jeffrey Bedey, Commander, Hurricane Protection Office. “This is also the first project that will provide permanent 100-year level of protection. We estimate the cost for this project between \$500 million and \$1 billion.”

The IHNC project will provide the 100-year level of protection before hurricane season 2011, which will greatly reduce the risk of floods caused by storm surge for Orleans Metro, Gentilly, New Orleans East, the Lower 9th Ward and St. Bernard Parish.

Also featured in the project are advanced measures that will provide local residents with interim protection by June 2009.

Corps officials anticipate achieving compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act through a two-step or tiered process. The signing of IER 11, Tier 1, is the first step in this process, and identifies a location range within which the proposed action could be built.

-more-

The Corps and the state sponsor are currently negotiating a Project Cooperation Agreement. The PCA will allow the Corps to award the design-build contract.

The Tier 2 document, the second step, will investigate alternative alignments and designs within the Tier 1 selected location range and explain the impacts of these alignments and footprints, construction materials and methods, and other design details. Corps officials anticipate completing this document this summer allowing the HPO to begin construction activities.

Additional IERs complement the IHNC project to provide 100-year protection throughout the New Orleans metro area. These include IER 18, for borrow material, IERs 4, 6-10, levee and floodwall upgrades and IER 5, protection for the outfall canals. The Corps recently received authorization to re-allocate funds from IER 5 to support the contract award for IER 11.

IER documents are available on www.nolaenvironmental.gov. Address questions or comments concerning proposed hurricane storm damage and risk reduction actions to:

Gib Owen, PM-RS
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267
Phone: 504-862-1337
Fax: 504-862-2088
E-mail: mvnenvironmental@usace.army.mil.

###