



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New Orleans District

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## Public Notice Meeting Announcement

April 4, 2007

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### **Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Mississippi River – Gulf Outlet, New Lock and Connecting Channels, LA**

The purpose of this document is to announce a public scoping meeting for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District (CEMVN) proposal to prepare a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate potential impacts of the construction of a replacement lock in the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC), also known as the Industrial Canal located in New Orleans, LA. Ideas and issues brought from this meeting can be incorporated into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, thereby reducing chances for reformulation or reassessment after the public review of the Draft SEIS.

#### **Public Action Requested**

**Dates:** The Corps plans to hold a public scoping meeting at 6:00 pm on April 4, 2007.

**Addresses:** The meeting will be held at Holy Cross School, 4950 Dauphine Street, New Orleans, LA 70117. The meeting will be held in the cafeteria trailer.

**Special Accommodations:** This meeting place is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Royce Kemp, (504) 862-2675 (voice) or (504) 862-2088 (fax), at least 5 business days prior to the meeting date.

An “open house” period is scheduled for 5:30 pm to 6:00 pm. The meeting will begin at 6:00 pm with a brief introduction, overview of the project, and explanation of the NEPA process. The meeting will then be opened for public comments. You will be asked to focus on the following questions:

- 1. What are the most important issues, resources, and impacts that should be considered in the SEIS?**
- 2. Are there any other alternatives or modifications to the tentative alternatives that should be considered in the SEIS?**

Participants are encouraged to voice whatever other concerns or comments they believe are appropriate to the project. In addition to comments made at the meeting, written comments will be accepted by letters postmarked no later than May 4, 2007 to be included in the Scoping Report.

## **Scoping Process**

The National Environmental Policy Act provides for an early and open public process for determining the scope of issues, resources, impacts, and alternatives to be addressed in the Draft SEIS. This is the first of several anticipated public meetings.

## **Project Background**

The IHNC connects the Mississippi River, the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MR-GO), the Industrial Canal, and Lake Pontchartrain. The existing lock, located between the St. Claude and Claiborne Avenue Bridges, was commissioned in 1923 to allow vessel traffic from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain and permit industrial development away from the river. During World War II, the GIWW was rerouted through the IHNC. Since the 1960s when a connection was made with the MR-GO, barge and ship traffic have greatly increased and the existing lock can no longer accommodate navigational needs efficiently through the IHNC. Because it was anticipated barge and ship traffic would increase, the lock replacement project was authorized in Chapter 112 of the River and Harbors and Flood Control Act of 1956 for the construction of a new lock when the existing lock was determined to become obsolete.

In March of 1998, the Corps issued a Final EIS analyzing several alternatives and recommending construction of a new lock north of the Claiborne Bridge, replacement of the St. Claude Avenue Bridge, modification of the Claiborne Bridge, extension of the Mississippi River flood protection levees and floodwalls, a socio-economic mitigation plan, and a fish and wildlife mitigation plan. This DSEIS is needed to update and supplement the 1998 Final EIS to determine if any significant changes are necessary to the project and to ensure sufficient environmental analysis of project impacts.

## **Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of the proposed lock construction is to provide more efficient navigational traffic through the IHNC by constructing a new, larger lock. The need for this project arises from the long delays in passage through the IHNC occurring from increased traffic and the small size of the current lock which can not accommodate the volume of existing and future traffic. The purpose of the Draft SEIS is to better evaluate the analysis and handling of dredged material generated during the construction phase, the engineering design of confined disposal areas, and several aspects of the project which may have changed since the original EIS was filed in 1998, to include any significant new circumstances relevant to environmental concerns that have arisen since Hurricane Katrina impacted the area on August 29, 2005.

## **Study Alternatives**

An evaluation of alternatives, including a "No Action" alternative will be prepared. In this DSEIS, the "No Action" alternative will be the course of action as decided upon in the 1998 Record of Decision and as further described in the 1998 EIS. Other alternatives will be determined through scoping, but are expected to include methods of dredging, dredged material handling and disposal alternatives, and construction of the lock by the cast-in-place method versus a float-in construction method. All alternatives will be investigated to determine the plan

with the highest net benefits. The action alternatives will be compared to the No-Action Alternative to determine impacts.

**Issues/Resources to be Addressed**

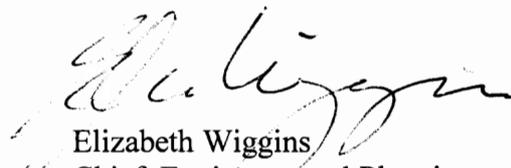
In addition to updating and supplementing the information from the 1998 EIS, the following issues have been identified for analysis in the Draft SEIS. This list is preliminary and is intended to facilitate public comment on the scope of the Draft SEIS. The Draft SEIS will consider the scope of contamination of sediments to be dredged as a result of this project, reasonable dredging and disposal alternatives and associated impacts, socio-economic changes from the prior EIS and now since Hurricane Katrina. Furthermore, the Corps will ensure that environmental compliance through the NEPA process will be maintained with all applicable environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders governing associated issues such as Federally listed threatened and endangered species, essential fish habitats, health and safety, economics, general environmental concerns, wetlands and other aquatic resources, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, navigation, recreation, water quality, property ownership considerations, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people, and other issues identified through scoping, public involvement, and interagency coordination. The Corps expects to better define the issues of concern and define the methods that will be used to evaluate those issues through the scoping process.

**For Further Information**

Interested parties are encouraged to express their concerns at any time during the NEPA process.

Questions regarding the proposed project should be addressed to the Project Manager Mr. Larry Poindexter, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, PPPMD Division, CEMVN-PM-E, PO Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160-0267, or telephone number (504) 862-2937. Mr. Poindexter may be reached via e-mail at [Larry.Poindexter@mvn02.usace.army.mil](mailto:Larry.Poindexter@mvn02.usace.army.mil).

NEPA scoping comments and questions regarding the Draft SEIS should be addressed to Mr. Royce Kemp, CEMVN-PM-RP, PO Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160-0267 or at telephone number (504) 862-2675. Mr. Kemp may be reached via e-mail at [Royce.B.Kemp@mvn02.usace.army.mil](mailto:Royce.B.Kemp@mvn02.usace.army.mil).



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