

Dear Ms. LeBlanc:

Thank you for your presentation during the Mississippi River Commission public meeting in Houma, Louisiana, on August 23, 2002. In your statement you discussed the issue of coastal erosion and its impact on the residents of coastal Louisiana.

The New Orleans District, in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources as the sponsor, is currently completing feasibility studies for two component projects of the Louisiana Coastal Area Comprehensive Plan. Draft feasibility reports for the Barataria Basin Wetland Creation and Restoration Study and the Barataria Basin Barrier Shoreline Restoration are nearing completion, and the final reports will be finished on a schedule that will allow these projects to be considered for authorization in a potential 2004 Water Resources Development Act.

We are also working on flood damage prevention projects such as the Morganza to the Gulf of Mexico hurricane protection project. The Chief of Engineers' report on this project was signed on August 23, 2002. The National Economic Development plan providing a 100-year level of protection has been selected as the recommended plan. The Pre-construction Engineering and Design (PED) phase for levees and floodgates is underway. The first construction contract is scheduled for award in Fiscal Year 2005, pending Congressional authorization, appropriation of funds for construction, and the execution of a Project Cooperation Agreement.

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The PED phase for the Houma Navigation Canal Lock is underway and is scheduled for completion by June 2004. Besides permitting navigation in the Houma Navigation Canal, the lock will also prevent saltwater intrusion to preserve the freshwater supply for the city of Houma.

With respect to the Isle de Jean Charles area that you mentioned, the community is not currently included in the Morganza to the Gulf project. Regrettably, the cost of constructing a hurricane protection levee to protect the island residents is prohibitive. Relocation of property

owners within the community is being considered and will be addressed in a Post-Authorization Change to the project, if appropriate.

The Commission appreciates receiving your views and looks forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely

Don T. Riley  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
President Designee, Mississippi  
River Commission