

# RESTORE

## THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER DELTA



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February 1, 2019

Colonel Michael N. Clancy, Commander  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New Orleans District  
7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118

Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group  
Deepwater Horizon  
Natural Resource Damage Assessment

Chairman Chip Kline  
Governor's Office of Coastal Activities  
Capital Annex, 1051 North 3rd Street, Suite 138  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Cc: Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council  
Council for Environmental Quality  
Office of Management and Budget

Dear Colonel Clancy, Chairman Kline, and Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group Members:

As we enter the New Year, our organizations thank you for your tireless efforts to evaluate the proposed Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project through the environmental review and permitting process. For many years, our groups have advocated together for sustainable, large-scale restoration of the Mississippi River Delta – a verified ecological gem, which also protects nationally-significant industries and commerce, as well as millions of coastal Louisiana residents. As you know, this valuable ecosystem is vanishing at an alarming rate. Preserving this special place long into the future requires reestablishing the natural processes that first built the coast, reconnecting the sediment-rich Mississippi River to its delta.

This year is a pivotal one for coastal restoration efforts in Louisiana, with a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion anticipated by the end of November 2019. We know that countless hours have already been spent among the agencies involved to achieve a permitting timeline that will result in a DEIS by year's end, with a Final EIS and Record of Decision for the project anticipated in November of 2020. We applaud the coordination and commitment that made this permitting timeline possible. We also acknowledge that, per the Federal Permitting Dashboard, there have been some delays, including required modeling runs that have resulted in slippage of some interim milestones. We also appreciate that the extended federal government shutdown impacted some agencies and staff involved in various aspects of project permitting. We are grateful to all the agencies involved in project review for their adaptability to ensure that these delays do not necessitate pushback of the DEIS target date.

The coming months are incredibly significant, as enormous strides must still be made in the environmental analysis and review that will ultimately inform permit decisions on the Mid-Barataria project. As always, we



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stand ready to assist you, and once again thank you for your commitment to the environmental review process for the diversion project, and to the broader restoration of Louisiana's remarkable coastal ecosystems.

Sincerely,

Steve Cochran  
Director, Restore the Mississippi River Delta

