

May 27, 2022

Submit to: mvnenvironmental@usace.army.mil

RE: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction Study

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

We, the 180 coastal stakeholders and community leaders signed below, write to express our strong support of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to West Shore Lake Pontchartrain levee project (WSLP) selecting the Maurepas Swamp Project (MSP) as the mitigation alternative. We commend the Army Corps for listening to stakeholders through public comment in early 2020. Community leaders weighed in loud and clear to urge consideration of the Maurepas Swamp Project as mitigation for WSLP. Louisiana needs these types of innovative and efficient solutions to restore our coast and protect communities in the face of a dire land loss crisis.

The Maurepas Swamp Project is the optimal mitigation option to offset WSLP project impacts to swamp habitats for the following reasons:

- The MSP is largely a preservation mitigation option that uses benefit areas within a larger CPRA restoration project (River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp, PO-0029) to offset WSLP swamp impacts and **allows mitigation to remain in the same watershed as the levee project.**
- The MSP mitigation project will allow complete funding of CPRA's PO-0029 project, which will reconnect the Mississippi River with the Maurepas Swamp, providing necessary freshwater flow-through and sediments that are vital to **restoring the degraded bald cypress-tupelo swamp.** PO-0029 will benefit over 45,000 acres of swamp that are currently in rapid decline.
- By constructing the MSP and WSLP Project concurrently, **the State and Army Corps will attain cost savings and efficiencies**, freeing up restoration funds to allow CPRA and others to pursue other high-priority projects.
- The WSLP Project and MSP will work together to **provide significant storm surge protection for nearby communities.**

Again, thank you for hearing coastal stakeholders, assessing this alternative, and supporting this common-sense approach and sound investment in coastal restoration and protection of communities. We enthusiastically look forward to seeing an increase in community protection and restoration of a marvelous coastal landscape.

Sincerely,

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2020 Louisiana Teacher of the Year and
National Teacher of the Year Finalist

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Bill Buckley Outdoor Photography

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Bill Lewis Fishing (Rat-L-Trap)

Michael Fleeman
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Jackie VanCleave
Blackley VanCleave Fishing

Buck Gardner
Buck Gardner Calls

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