November X, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Clancy and CWPPRA Taskforce:

The Restore the Mississippi River Delta Coalition is dedicated to large-scale, ecosystem restoration in the Mississippi River Delta and the New Orleans Landbridge is a priority project for all of our organizations. The New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation is an excellent example of a CWPPRA project that can help achieve the vision of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan and sustain our coast for a more resilient future. We believe that this project should be a priority for the CWPPRA program and Technical Committee to advance for Phase 2 funding.

As organizations with long-standing interest in the Louisiana CWPPRA coastal projects and funding designations, we are writing to show our support for Fish and Wildlife Service PPL24 project, New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation (PO-169). The New Orleans Landbridge plays a critical role in protecting more than 1.5 million people in the parishes surrounding Lake Pontchartrain. The landbridge is a key to maintaining the normal tidal flow between the lake and the Gulf of Mexico and is identified by the Army Corps of Engineers as a "Critical Landscape Feature" because it reduces inland surges.

Local subsidence combined with the exposure to high wave energy has resulted in rapid retreat of the New Orleans Landbridge shoreline. This area has endured significant erosion and in some places, the shoreline has retreated as much as 450 feet since 1956. Once constructed, the project will restore and enhance 271 acres of brackish marsh and protect 15,340 linear feet of shoreline to maintain the structural integrity of the Orleans Landbridge. This project will work synergistically with nearby CWPPRA projects including St. Catherine Island Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection (PO-170) and Fritchie Marsh Creation and Terracing (PO-173). This work supports the 2017 Louisiana Coastal Master Plan and will result in increased protection from storm surges and waves, improved fish and wildlife habitat particularly for a large number of wintering birds, and increased resiliency of coastal wetlands to erosion, subsidence, and sea level rise.

We greatly appreciate the considerations of such a worthwhile restoration effort and are pleased to see CWPPRA continuing their efforts to provide funding for much needed projects. This process has already provided immense support for coastal restoration and continues to push forward projects consistent with the Coastal Master Plan. We hope these comments underscore both the urgency of project implementation and continuing fiscal responsibility as we work together toward a sustainable coast.

Sincerely,

Natalie Snider
Science Policy Director
Environmental Defense Fund

John Lopez, Ph.D.
Director, Coast and Community Program
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation

Kim Reyher
Executive Director,
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

Cynthia Duet
Deputy Director,
Audubon Louisiana

David Muth
Director, Gulf Restoration Program
National Wildlife Federation

cc: Brad Inman, CWPPRA Program Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District
         Johnny Bradberry, Executive Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Activities, Governor's Office
         Charles W. Maguire, Director of Water Division, U.S. EPA Region 6 Water Division
         Jeff Weller, Program Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
         Kevin Norton, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service
         Christopher Doley, Director NOAA Restoration Center, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
         Micaela Connor, Project Manager, CPRA Project Management Division
         Angela Trahan, Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service