

April 26, 2013
Meeting between
David Vitter, U. S. Senator
and the
Eden Isles Homeowners Association Flood Committee
Subject
Storm Surge Structures at Rigolets and Chef Menteur Pass

Facts:

1. Lake Pontchartrain Surge Control Structures are vital for the survival of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.
 - a. A population of 700,000 residents and billions of dollars in homes, businesses and infrastructure are at risk from flooding and from diminished property values. New insurance flood rates will be so high and property values so low that many will be forced to walk away from their homes; parish tax revenue in the Lake Pontchartrain basin will plummet.
2. Lake Pontchartrain surge control structures have the support of all surrounding Lake Pontchartrain basin parish officials.
3. Lake Pontchartrain Surge Control Structures are cost effective.
 - a. A one time \$4 billion investment will save more than \$10 billion in losses.
 - b. 2012 Louisiana Comprehensive Master Plan approves Lake Pontchartrain Barriers and stated they are, “one of the most cost effective risk reduction projects analyzed, providing expected annual damage reduction in Year 50 between \$2.1 and \$10.4 billion”.
 - c. Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – East Land Bridge Study cost estimate:
 - i. \$1.1 billion for levee construction (17 miles from Orleans to St. Tammany).
 - ii. Navigational structures at Rigolets and Chef Menteur passes were not studied, but are estimated to be less than \$3 billion (\$300 – \$700M range for Chef Pass structure and if the nation’s largest sector gate at the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway was built for \$1 billion then the Rigolets structure should cost less).
4. Environmental issues did not prevent the Corps from constructing Lake Pontchartrain surge structures.
 - a. The 1975 court ruling did not rule against the surge structures; it simply stated that the Corps had to submit a proper Environmental Impact Statement.
 - b. Lieutenant General Elvin Heiberg, former commander of the Corps of Engineers New Orleans District, confessed in a Times-Picayune editorial on June 22, 2007, that he decided to stop fighting for the barriers and stated that it was the biggest mistake he made in his 35 years as an army officer.
5. Lake Pontchartrain surge structures would not cause significant impact to Mississippi.
 - a. A properly constructed surge structures that allow over topping would have little impact on populated areas of Mississippi.
 - b. The Corps’ 2009 Hydraulics Report concluded that over topping Lake Pontchartrain weir structures would have an average increase of six inches at Bay St. Louis, with a population of only nine thousand people. This report was conducted before the \$16.6 million seawall protection structure at Bay St. Louis was built.
6. Corps believes Lake Pontchartrain structures are a good idea.
 - a. At the Corps’ public meeting held on November 14, 2012, Colonel Fleming stated, “Barriers at the Rigolets and Chef Menteur Pass is a good plan, it does need to be looked at and it is something the Corps needs to take into consideration.”

7. The Corps has the authority to pursue Lake Pontchartrain surge structures.
 - a. The 1965 the Louisiana Hurricane Protection Project in the Flood Control Act authorized funded and directed the Corps to provide hurricane protection to the lowlands in the Lake Pontchartrain tidal basin. The Corps chose to disregard that mandate and protect only the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain.
8. The Corps has received funding to protect the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.
 - a. The original funding from the Flood Control Act was to protect the entire lake basin, not just the south shore. The Corps disregarded congress' mandate and chose to fund only south shore projects with the \$14+ billion received after hurricane Katrina. This constitutes a miss appreciation of funds.
9. Corps built the south shore structures without knowing their full impact to the north shore.
 - a. The Corps did not evaluate 60% of their south shore structures (those built between 1965 & 2005) when determining impact to the north shore (this is gross negligence).
 - b. The Corps has agreed to conduct a new study to evaluate impact of all their structures built since 1965. This new study is scheduled for completion in November 2013.
10. Corps will have to mitigate damages their structures cause.
 - a. At the Corps' public meeting held on November 14, 2012, Colonel Fleming stated, "If we build a system that has significant impacts on somebody else, then we have to, I'll use the phrase mitigate for probably not in terms of wetlands mitigation, but in terms of some other type of project."

Request for Senator Vitter:

1. Provide the Corps with Congressional documentation that they were authorized and required by the Louisiana Hurricane Protection Project in the Flood Control Act of 1965 to protect the entire Lake Pontchartrain Basin, not just the south shore.
2. Have the Corps provide a plan and schedule to implement congress' mandate to protect the entire Lake Pontchartrain Basin as required by the Louisiana Hurricane Protection Project in the Flood Control Act of 1965.
3. Have the Corps redirect their funding to implement Louisiana Hurricane Protection Project in the Flood Control Act of 1965 to protect the entire Lake Pontchartrain Basin as originally required.
4. Peruse funding for the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority's Land Bridge and/or similar projects to keep surge from entering Lake Pontchartrain i.e. BP settlement, Water Resources Development Act, etc.
5. Expedite study of the impact Corps' structures built since 1965 have on the north shore (currently scheduled for November 2013).
 - a. If the corrected study shows significant impact to the north shore direct the Corps to mitigate those damages.
 - b. As a mitigation project it becomes the responsibility of the Corps (not congress) to obtain funding and expedite construction similar to what was done for the MRGO project.

Pic. added 4-26-13



Left to right:

Meteorologist & Lakeview HOA rep.- Dr. Pat Fitzpatrick

State Senator- A.G. Crowe

U.S. Senator- David Vitter

Former USACE (retired) & Northshore Beach homeowner- Dennis Strecker

EIHOA rep.- Lee Longstreet

EIHOA rep.- Thomas Thompson

EIHOA rep.- John Faust

In attendance but not pictured- St. Tammany Parish C.A.O.- Bill Oiler