

May 30, 2008

Tim Axtman, Senior Project Manager  
LACPR  
CEMVN-PM-R  
P.O. Box 60297  
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Dear Mr. Axtman,

The Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce is a nearly 800-member business association and has historically been a proponent of coastal restoration. The Chamber has partnered with Restore or Retreat and over 200 diverse business and individuals to form a grass-roots effort to aggressively identify, expedite, and implement a long-term, large scale restoration solution to sustain this irreplaceable region. The Chamber of Commerce would like to respectfully submit the following comments regarding the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration (LACPR) Draft Technical Report issued this spring by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

While a significant amount of data has been collected and processed, we believe there is more accurate and more current information not being utilized, especially with regard to the economic justification for restoring and protection certain areas. The Houma Metropolitan Statistical Area (Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes) began to see tremendous growth not after the hurricanes of 2005, but dating back to the Deep Water Royalty Relief Act of the 1990s. Our area is the fastest growing in the state, with the lowest unemployment, nearly 3% below the national average. A recent report conducted by Loren Scott and Associates for the Greater Lafourche Port Commission indicates that \$1.5 billion of business sales in 2006 are linked to Port Fourchon alone, and its overall impact of the surrounding communities even greater. With the price of oil per barrel almost twice that of 2006, the impact can only be greater and even more far-reaching. It would behoove the Corps of Engineers to use existing data such as this report, as well as the most recent sales tax and personal income figures which are easily accessed, to properly calculate the current economics of a region to determine its economic vitality and the potential devastating effects if not restored or protected properly.

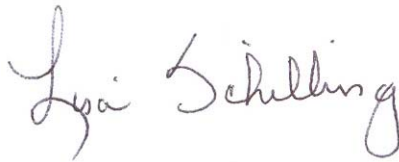
The most significant deficiency we see is the lack of detail concerning restoration and protection for the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins. The area experiencing the greatest amount of land loss in our state and nation deserves a significant, large-scale, long-term, naturally-systemic solution. While both freshwater and sediment diversions along the lower river are important to that area, the reality is a significant restoration project for the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins would impact a greater area and can be easily justified by basin land loss rates, population, and the vital economy it protects. Restoring this area will be difficult and expensive, but it is a necessary action that must be taken by the federal government to protect its own economic interest.

Additionally, the Corps must not neglect the protection of this area by authorized protection systems such as Morganza to the Gulf and the Larose to Golden Meadow systems. Authorized by Congress, the leaders of our nation have mandated the Corps to provide adequate protection to the people of southern Louisiana. A permanent alignment must be swiftly solidified for Morganza, and work on such critical

features such as the Houma Navigational Canal lock must be expedited. The Larose to Golden Meadow System must be provided with adequate means, financial and otherwise, to restore its system to an elevation inline with the new standards. **With the successfully implementation of these systems, the Corps has an opportunity to be proactive in protecting this region for devastating storms instead reactive as it has been in New Orleans, costing the people of this nation billions of dollars.**

The Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce, the 800 businesses it represents and the thousands of individuals working in Terrebonne Parish implore the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to not neglect such an important area as the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins. These basins provide valuable resources for the nation, including 18% of the nation's oil production, 24% of the nation's natural gas production, 20,000 miles of pipelines and infrastructure, passage of 500 million tons of waterborne cargo, most bountiful commercial fisheries in the lower 48 states and valuable wetland protection for over half of the state's population. The citizens of this area have long been supportive and proactive in fighting to protect their community and culture, and we are asking the same of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Schilling".

Lisa Schilling  
2008 Chairman of the Board

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Drake Pothier".

Drake Pothier, IOM  
President & CEO