From: Stephen Stuart
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: Public comment re: 17th St. Canal Pumping Station
Date: Friday, May 15, 2009 10:50:50 AM

Mr. Gib Owen
Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dear Mr. Owen,

I am writing to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in designing and constructing the new pumping station near the mouth of the 17th Street Canal in New Orleans, to avoid or minimize any permanent impact on the Coconut Beach facility.

As a volleyball player at Coconut Beach for the past 10 years, I can say that the facility is an important recreational center in New Orleans. It has long provided a place for thousands of local residents to play volleyball and socialize. The facility is even more popular since it reopened post-Katrina, a testament to the demand for high-quality recreational facilities in a city still struggling to recover from the disaster.

Coconut Beach is also an anchor for a recovering neighborhood. The West End park area adjacent to Coconut Beach lost all of its restaurants to Katrina's storm surge. None have returned. Other businesses and the boathouses lining the park received major damage as well. Some have renovated or rebuilt. Coconut Beach plays an important role by attracting thousands of volleyball players every week to the area. This provides a much-needed source of daytime and nighttime activity and acts as a natural deterrent to crime. The taking of this thriving recreational center for a monolithic pumping station would detract from, and potentially harm, the neighborhood's recovery.

Certainly, a pumping station near the mouth of the canal is essential for proper flood protection in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. It would not only pump water out of the 17th Street Canal, but also block storm surge from entering the canal. My concern is that in situating, designing and building this pumping station, the Corps of Engineers should do everything possible to avoid or minimize any permanent impact on Coconut Beach.

New Orleans' recovery since the 2005 disaster is the story of thousands of small recoveries, those of individuals, families and businesses. Coconut Beach is one of the best stories. It shows how people can persevere, rebuild and create

something even better than before. Let's protect the Coconut Beach facility and ensure its continued success.

Sincerely,

Stephen Stuart
Metairie, LA