From: Matt.Cuttitta@shell.com
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: Pumping station: Mickey Retif / Coconut Beach Volleyball Complex
Date: Monday, May 18, 2009 2:46:02 PM

Mr. Owen and the US Army Corps of Engineers:

I am deeply concerned with a pumping station being built on the current grounds of the Coconut Beach Volleyball Complex. My comments will differ from most letters you receive from volleyball players. Unlike most who have lived here all of their lives, I am a young professional who has been in New Orleans for less than 2 years. I can't comment about how it brings our community together or how it relieves the stress of a disaster-filled area. I will instead comment on how it directly affects New Orleans ability to bring & retain young professionals, a vital component of our society and economy.

Coconut Beach impacts the quality of life of a young professional in very dramatic ways. This is why I found and visited Coconut Beach prior to accepting my job and moving to New Orleans. Coconut Beach was a strong driver in my decision to move to, and to continue living in, New Orleans. First, Coconut Beach provides some young professionals with a venue to do what they love: play beach volleyball. Second, Coconut Beach allows a newcomer to meet a variety of people: the beginning of long-lasting relationships. Third, the relationships at Coconut Beach build strong ties to New Orleans that encourage our newcomers to stay here. Fourth, it provides all residents with a fun, rewarding activity: one that keeps all of us (both young and old) away from crime, drugs, alcohol, etc.

I encourage the Army Corps of Engineers to ask its managers and young professionals for comments as well. There are engineers at the Corps who play at Coconut Beach. We here at Shell have a number of engineers (and other staff) who play at Coconut Beach. While it will be difficult to recruit young professionals to New Orleans for years to come, Coconut Beach is one place that helps.

Whether it's referred to as the Coconut Beach family, a health club, a volleyball complex, or just a place to have fun; Coconut Beach impacts New Orleans in more ways than you might think. I hope the decision-makers understand its value before eliminating 10% to 100% of it.

Best wishes,

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