

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2011

Colonel Edward Fleming
Commander
New Orleans District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
7400 Leake Avenue,
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Fleming:

Thank you for quickly approving the permit to implement the Bayou Chene Backwater Barge Closure Project. We respectfully request that you use available funding to reimburse the St. Mary Levee District and St. Mary Parish for any costs they incurred in implementing this project.

As you are aware, it appears that flooding on the Mississippi River will necessitate opening of the Morganza Spillway. Opening of the Spillway will send more than 1.4 million cubic feet per second (when combined with the increased flows coming from the Old River Complex).

In order to combat this flooding, the St. Mary Levee District has initiated the Bayou Chene Backwater Barge Closure Project. This project would sink and moor-in-place a submersible deck barge and place 17,000 tons of rip rap and Hesco baskets into the Bayou Chene. In doing so, this project will divert water into the uninhabited marshes south of Bayou Chene; thus preventing flooding in Terrebonne, Iberville, St. Martin, Lafourche, Assumption Parishes along with areas within St. Mary Parish. Included in the areas protected is the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway—a Federal navigation channel.

As you know, this project helps abate flooding caused by a federal action—the opening of the Morganza Spillway—and will protect federal interests in and around the basin. We believe it is the responsibility of the Federal government to reimburse funding for this project. Thank you for diligent work in protecting Louisianans during this flooding and for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Respectfully,



David Vitter
U.S. Senator



Jeff Landry
Member of Congress