

MOON LANDRIEU, President
HARRY McCALL, JR., President Pro-Tem.

Sewerage & Water Board OF NEW ORLEANS

STUART H. BREHM, JR.
Executive Director

CITY HALL • CIVIC CENTER
NEW ORLEANS, LA., 70165 • 586-4588

November 23, 1977

Mr. August Perez, III
2609 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

Dear Augie:

I read your letter in the Times Picayune of November the 21st, relative to "Hurricane Protection".

While I can agree with much of what you say, I certainly cannot agree with your conclusion that we should abandon the barrier plan.

I did not even know that a "Part B" proposal had been developed, but I certainly can agree with your logical conclusion that to construct high level levees around the entire Shoreline of Lake Pontchartrain, as well as in other contiguous waterway areas where this high level levee would be needed would be almost ludicrous.

I don't know if you are aware or not, but in order to keep Lake Pontchartrain from emptying into the City of New Orleans under the project hurricane it would be necessary that the small back levees in the area between the Industrial Canal and Jefferson Parish be raised to an elevation around twenty feet plus or minus over mean sea level. This will require utilization of a Land Strip approximately 150 feet in width in the current parkway area extending along that section of the Lakefront. Additionally, because of the tide level aspects that will be encountered, something similar or perhaps some very special type of levee would be required along the London Avenue Drainage Canal, the Orleans Avenue Drainage Canal, and the Seventeenth Street Drainage Canal. A possible alternative (certainly a safer one) would be to relocate Drainage pumping stations 6, 7, and 5 to the Lakefront making the high level canals low level, then rearranging the drainage system between the Lake and Florida Avenue/Metairie Ridge and between the Orleans/Jefferson Parish Line and the Industrial Canal.

From the Lakefront Airport East, one of two options would be available, raise the existing levees and at the same time broaden these levees so as to either add on the Lakeside or to widen on the riverside and use Haynes Blvd., or in the alternative to put some type of sheet piling in this entire levee area with a concrete cap.

You stated that "second a most important consideration is exactly what the probability of this "killer" storm is. This cannot be calculated mathematically because it has never happened in recorded history." This is incorrect, Camille was a project hurricane that struck the Gulf Coast. The wind force intensity and "fetch" of Camille was utilized by Dr. Simpson of Miami, and he shifted the location of Camille 30 miles west to the project area for New Orleans, (pass Chef Menteur) and based upon this shift and computer study it indicated that between 100,000 and 150,000 people would have died depending on the time of day on night.

I must admit there will be some inconvenience brought on by the barrier plan. As an example, when you or I decide to go fishing through either the Chef or Rigolets we may encounter some delay in going through the systems. I doubt, however, that this would be much more of a delay than waiting for the L & N Railroad Bridge when a train is approaching or passing.

I cannot agree with your contention that this would have an adverse effect because of the "additional cost of commercial water transportation". I think when we are considering the lives of the people of the City of New Orleans; I do not think that a small delay in commercial water transportation would in any manner or form significantly compare to this danger.

Also, let me point out that this is not the first barrier arrangement for hurricane protection. There are three such barrier plans that have been executed along the East Coast, and the fourth is now under construction. Additionally, in other portions of the world this is being put into effect, such as the Thames River in England.

I want to call to your attention that as regards to the ecology impact, that the Environmental Impact statement that was prepared in connection with this project has been approved by all official agencies that are involved, and I can think of no one except some hard core environmentalists and ecologists who feel that this barrier plan is not environmentally sound, and they would sacrifice the project as well as the lives of the people of the City of New Orleans. In closing, let me point out just one instance that I personally know of as relative to a project hurricane.

In 1974, when "Carmen" was hovering over the Coast of Louisiana

Augie:

November 23, 1977

Page 3

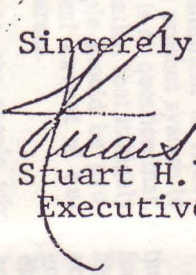
and her course had been plotted so that the eye was to cross at pass Chef Menteur; we, "Sewerage and Water Board, Levee Board, and City Officials" met with corp of engineer personnel at Prytania Street to determine what course of action should we take i.e., attempt some type of evacuation or "ride it out". At that time, the Chief Hydrologist for the corp predicted that with the winds that were in Carmen at that time and following the path that the storm was taking, we could expect to have four feet of clear water running over the back levees along the Lakefront between the Industrial Canal and the New Basin Canal.

Fortunately, while we were "sweating it out" Carmen took a westerly course, passing west of New Orleans and we were spared. Needless to say, this scared my pants off, and I never again want to see a situation where we are faced with this danger.

As a final after thought, David P. Barnes, Chief Meteorologist for the New Orleans Hurricane Warning Office said, "The National Weather Service recognizes that the greatest natural disaster that could affect the United States may occur in the Lake Pontchartrain area as a result of massive Lake flooding induced by a severe hurricane". (Underlining added for emphasis).

I think the time has come when we had better start listening to those experts who have the responsibility to protect our lives and property and to quit listening to the special interests groups who want to protect and preserve all of their commercial and political opinions as well as the Environmental groups, who are perfectly willing to stick their heads in the sand to avoid facing the danger.

Sincerely,


Stuart H. Brehm, Jr.
Executive Director

SHBjr/dmp

Views of Readers

New Orleans.

Editor, The Times-Picayune:

Hitler perfected the big lie — tell one outlandish enough, repeat it often enough and it becomes believable. Persons promoting the Equal Rights Amendment have used the Hitler technique in their oft repeated charges that "groups such as Stop ERA have vast sums of money" (Letter, Mindy Guidry, Nov. 14).

Neither Ms. Guidry nor her cohorts ever document their charges. As a member of Stop ERA, I know that is only by personal sacrifice and with our own nickels and dimes that we have been able to oppose those who are pushing for ERA.

Do the ERA proponents repeat this lie in order to cover up the "vast sums of money" made available to them? A breakdown, in part, of the sources of their finances includes \$5 million of U.S. tax money voted by the Congress to the National Commission for International Women's Year; unknown thousands of U.S. tax dollars appropriated for the Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women, operating within the U.S. Department of Labor (\$80,000 in 1974); thousands of dollars appropriated to the State Commission on the Status of Women (\$123,277 for Louisiana Commission in 1975-76); \$288,000 from Rockefeller Foundation to California Status of Women, 1974; \$148,000 National Organization for Women, 1973; \$250,000 given by women's groups to hire public relations firm to promote ERA (Washington Star, 12 Nov.).

Is Big Money Behind ERA?

It is bad enough that from our tax-depleted personal income we have to fight ERA proponents who are using our own tax dollars against us. It adds insult to injury to see in print the unsubstantiated charge that "groups such as Stop ERA have vast sums of money . . . and have therefore been able to defeat the ERA in states such as Louisiana where dollar is king."

MARILYN THAYER.

Hurricane Protection

New Orleans.

Editor, The Times-Picayune:

I want to thank you and to compliment you on your recent editorial and articles in referring to the controversy over the one-year "barrier plan" moratorium for the hurricane protection system for New Orleans.

I have a personal interest in this matter as my home is in the Chef Pass, which is beyond the present hurricane protection system. Therefore I would like to pass on to you what I consider significant points of the controversy.

First, there is no question that the Corps of Engineers has made an in-depth study of this situation. The study is very technical and I am hardly in a position to discredit it.

Second, a most important consideration is exactly what the probability of this "killer" storm is. This cannot be calculated mathematically because it has never happened in recorded history. Therefore it is impossible to make a projection but I think that most all ex-

perts would agree that the probability of this exact storm is very unlikely. (But it could happen next year and we must address ourselves to the potential problem.)

The third important point is to evaluate the people and land as they are protected now and accept the responsibility of continued protection for them. As a result of the many years of constructing systems to protect people from high tides and hurricane damages New Orleans has an extensive levee system. We do have a commitment to these people inside of this present system to be protected. There is no question that, even in a storm situation that is highly unlikely, those people should be protected to the fullest extent of our knowledge and resources.

By the same token, the people who are not now protected and who knowingly live, like myself, exposed to the possibility of flooding, do not necessarily demand that obligation.

The fourth point is whether or not government should invest in further land development or include more land in the now questionable hurricane protection system.

The Corps has expertly presented a multitude of ways to compensate for the "killer" storm. Most have been properly eliminated. In the final analysis they recommended two workable solutions, the "barrier plan" and the "high-level plan."

The recommended "barrier plan," in effect, is to construct physical barriers

(operable dams) across the Rigolets, the Chef and the Industrial Canal which will control the water level in Lake Pontchartrain. This plan has an estimated price of \$399 million.

The "high-level plan," in effect, is Part A, raising of existing levees and Part B, the construction of additional levees around the entire shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Part A is estimated to cost only \$100 million. Part B's estimated cost is not calculated, and both the Corps and I agree it is totally impractical.

The Corps uses this very fact, though, to substantiate the only reason for going to the barrier plan over the high-level plan. They take the total acreage affected and divide it by the cost. Obviously the high-level plan, including Part A and Part B, would not be practical. But if we construct only Part A, that is the most practical solution — \$250 million more practical.

A multitude of other things have surfaced while debating these plans; for instance, the ecology impact, the additional cost of commercial water transportation, inconvenience to the water sports of boating and fishing, and the impact on the shrimping and oyster industry.

All things considered, there is no doubt the high-level plan Part A should be implemented — save the \$250 million and further protect only the people to whom we are committed, and abandon immediately the barrier plan.

AUGUST PEREZ III.

Times Picayune
11/21/77