

IN REPLY REFER TO  
LMNED-DD

4 April 1978

Mr. David L. Pierce  
Prudential Insurance Company of America  
Suite 1520, Amoco Building  
1340 Poydras Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

Dear Mr. Pierce:

Thank you for the copy of your minutes of the 10 March meeting between your committee and members of my staff. In order to avoid possible misunderstandings, please allow us to clarify several matters covered in your minutes.

A few observations concerning the Standard Project Hurricane (SPH) would, we believe, be helpful. The use of this hurricane for design purposes, when hazard to human life inheres in a failure of the protective system, is standard with the US Army Corps of Engineers. The SPH is composed of physical parameters--wind, speed, central pressure index, etc.,--which, though of major magnitude, are still characteristic of the region. The Standard Project Hurricane's primary use is in determining how high the embankments and structures designed to exclude hurricane surges from protected areas must be. Its use for this purpose insures that the system will withstand the occurrence of any hurricane which is characteristic of the region. Although it is true to say, as the minutes do, that the project is designed to protect against the Standard Project Hurricane, it should be understood that the majority of the benefits which justify the project's construction will derive from the prevention of flooding which would otherwise be associated with the occurrence of hurricanes of lesser magnitude than the SPH. We mention this because in some quarters we have been accused of inventing a hypothetical hurricane and then designing a project exclusively to fit it.

In addition, we believe the following clarifications should be made relative to your "alternatives" paragraph:

a. Though it is true that the higher levees required under a high level plan will require more rights-of-way, the Corps of Engineers does not feel that it would be impossible to construct such levees on the New Orleans



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(Jefferson Parish line to Industrial Canal) lakefront. We do, however, believe that a high level levee cannot be built on the existing lakefront alignment between the Industrial Canal and Paris Road without relocating either Hayne Boulevard or the Southern Railroad Company tracks.

b. On those portions of the lakefront where high level levees are impractical, floodwall construction as well as an "in-the-lake" alignment would be considered as possible alternatives.

c. The estimate which indicated that the high level plan was approximately 50 percent more costly than the barrier plan, was developed in the early 1960's during project formulation. New estimates for all alternatives, including the high level plan, will be developed for the revised Environmental Impact Statement.

d. Since we only touched briefly on the alternatives question, please understand that much more can be said about the relative merits of the high level and barrier plans, and we would be glad to discuss them in greater detail if you so desire. Meanwhile, we are committed to presenting in the revised Environmental Impact Statement a detailed comparison of all alternatives and are presently working toward that end.

If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely yours,

FREDERIC M. CHATRY  
Chief, Engineering Division

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