



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
CIVIL WORKS
108 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0108

JUN 5 2008

Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In final response to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006 (Public Law 109-234) and Section 4304 of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110-28), and in accordance with Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, the Secretary of the Army recommends deauthorization of part of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) project, Louisiana. Pursuant to Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, upon submission of the final report to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the MRGO from the Gulf of Mexico to Mile 60 at the southern bank of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway is no longer authorized. Section 7013 also authorizes the Secretary of the Army to carry out a plan to close the MRGO and to restore and protect the ecosystem substantially in accordance with the final report subject to the Secretary's determination that the plan is cost-effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible. The proposal is described in the report of the Chief of Engineers dated January 29, 2008, which includes other pertinent reports and comments. The views of the State of Louisiana, the Department of the Interior and the United States Coast Guard are set forth in the enclosed communications.

The plan includes the construction of a rock closure structure at the south ridge of Bayou La Loutre in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, approximately at mile 36 on the MRGO. The structure would span the MRGO and connect the two sides of the ridge, a distance of approximately 950 feet rising to elevation +7 North American Vertical Datum 1988, with a top width of approximately 12 feet and side slopes of 1 vertical to 2 horizontal. In addition, overbank extensions would be approximately 50 feet wide and 7 feet high and extend inshore approximately 150 feet on the south bank and approximately 250 feet on the north bank. Existing bank stabilization features and jetties in this portion of the



MRGO would remain in place. Disposal area easements and perpetual channel easements that are no longer required will be released in accordance with Federal law. Because the plan would not have any significant adverse environmental effects, no mitigation measures (beyond management practices and avoidance) or compensation measures are required.

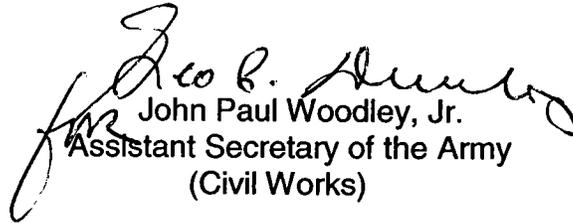
Based on October 2007 price levels, the total first cost of the recommended plan is estimated at \$25,390,000. The Federal share of the first costs is \$24,080,000; the Federal Government will be responsible for 100 percent of the construction cost of the closure structure and 100 percent of the costs related to the disposal of existing easements, with such costs currently estimated at \$23,950,000 and \$130,000, respectively. Since the purpose of this action is to deauthorize and close the MRGO channel, the Federal Government will be relieved of its operation and maintenance obligations on the project and given the recommendation of the Chief of Engineers that construction of a closure structure will reduce any risk of unsafe through navigation, it is my assessment that the decision to complete the closure structure at 100 percent Federal cost is warranted.

The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana will be the non-Federal sponsor for the implementation of the closure plan. The non-Federal sponsor will be responsible for providing the lands, easements, rights-of-way, relocations, and disposal areas (LERRDs), a cost estimated at \$1,310,000. In addition, the non-Federal sponsor will be responsible for the operation, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and replacement (OMRR&R) of the closure plan at 100 percent non-Federal expense, a cost currently estimated at \$177,000 per year. Therefore, in accordance with Section 7013(a)(4), I have determined that the closure is cost-effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) advises that there is no objection to the submission of the report to Congress. A copy of its letter is enclosed. In order to fulfill the additional ecosystem restoration requirements of Section 7013, the Corps of Engineers will prepare a supplemental report on such measures that will be submitted to my office and to OMB under E.O. 12322 before transmittal to Congress. I am providing a copy of this transmittal and the OMB letter to the ranking minority member of your committee and the Chairwoman and the ranking minority member of the Senate Committee on

Environment and Public Works, as required by Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

Very truly yours,

Handwritten signature of John Paul Woodley, Jr. in black ink, written over the typed name and title.

John Paul Woodley, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

Enclosures



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JUN 5 2008

Honorable John L. Mica
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Mica:

In final response to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006 (Public Law 109-234) and Section 4304 of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110-28), and in accordance with Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, the Secretary of the Army recommends deauthorization of part of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) project, Louisiana. Pursuant to Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, upon submission of the final report to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the MRGO from the Gulf of Mexico to Mile 60 at the southern bank of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway is no longer authorized. Section 7013 also authorizes the Secretary of the Army to carry out a plan to close the MRGO and to restore and protect the ecosystem substantially in accordance with the final report subject to the Secretary's determination that the plan is cost-effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible. The proposal is described in the report of the Chief of Engineers dated January 29, 2008, which includes other pertinent reports and comments. The views of the State of Louisiana, the Department of the Interior and the United States Coast Guard are set forth in the enclosed communications.

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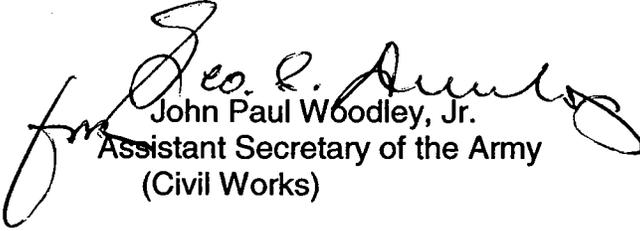
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minority member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, as required by Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

Very truly yours,


John Paul Woodley, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

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JUN 5 2008

Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6175

Dear Senator Inhofe:

In final response to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006 (Public Law 109-234) and Section 4304 of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110-28), and in accordance with Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, the Secretary of the Army recommends deauthorization of part of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) project, Louisiana. Pursuant to Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, upon submission of the final report to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the MRGO from the Gulf of Mexico to Mile 60 at the southern bank of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway is no longer authorized. Section 7013 also authorizes the Secretary of the Army to carry out a plan to close the MRGO and to restore and protect the ecosystem substantially in accordance with the final report subject to the Secretary's determination that the plan is cost-effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible. The proposal is described in the report of the Chief of Engineers dated January 29, 2008, which includes other pertinent reports and comments. The views of the State of Louisiana, the Department of the Interior and the United States Coast Guard are set forth in the enclosed communications.

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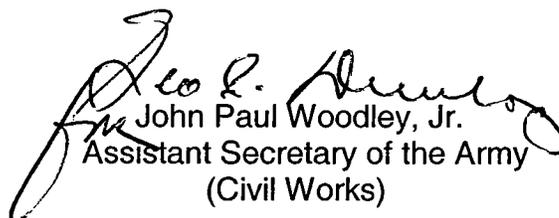
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minority member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,
as required by Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

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John Paul Woodley, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

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7 Enclosures

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2. DOI letter to USACE, Dec 10, 2007
3. USCG letter to USACE, Dec 3, 2007
4. Report of the Chief of Engineers, Jan 29, 2008
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6. Office of Management and Budget, May 30, 2008
7. Integrated Final Report to Congress and Legislative Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Deep-Draft De-authorization Study



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JUN 5 2008

Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairwoman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6175

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

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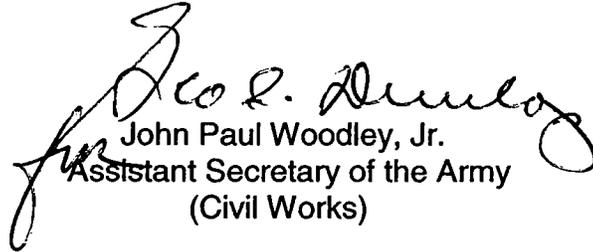
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