

ASSOCIATION OF LEVEE BOARDS OF LOUISIANA

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April 4, 2005

The Honorable Mary L. Landrieu
The Honorable David Vitter
The Honorable Charlie Melancon
The Honorable Bobby Jindal
The Honorable William Jefferson

The Honorable Jim McCrery
The Honorable Rodney Alexander
The Honorable Richard Baker
The Honorable Charles Boustany, Jr.

The work of the Levee Boards of Louisiana is to protect the most critical parts of Louisiana. Without that protection, major parts of our population, economy and roadways would find major flooding on an annual basis. Because our protection has functioned very well for decades at a time, the electorate, and sometimes elected officials, forget that without flood protection nothing else matters.

Almost all levee projects (in both north and south Louisiana) have been slowed due to reduced funding on the federal level for authorized projects. We as businessmen, tax payers, and levee board members understand the budget crisis our nation is facing. However, without our river levees and hurricane levees, the cost to our country from flood issues will greatly outweigh the relatively small cost to support the construction of our flood protection projects.

We must also authorize new projects and increase the flood protection in south Louisiana due to hurricane threats and south Louisiana land loss. The Levee Board Association's 'Comprehensive Hurricane Protection' plan supports tidal protection for most of southeast Louisiana and recommends increased protection for the Lake Ponchartrain Basin, including New Orleans. Our plan is to provide the same continuity of protection from the Gulf as we have from the river with our Mississippi River levees.

The problems for funding the SELA project and LCA need to be addressed and are supported by the Association of Levee Boards of Louisiana. But we must emphatically remind you that our greatest threat from flooding, whether from rivers or the Gulf, can be mitigated only through flood protection systems. Your support of flood protection systems will determine the limitations on our communities and their economies. The hierarchy of needs for most of Louisiana begins with flood protection, then the others like highways and education. It was critical in the founding of Louisiana and is no less important today.

Sincerely,

Ronald Callais
President
Association of Levee Boards of Louisiana

Mr. Callais may be contacted at the following address:

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