

February 28, 2005

Letter to the Editor  
Daily Comet

In your editorial, "A waste of resources", it appears that you imply that the flyover is a useless exercise because of these assumptions:

1. Our Congressional delegation already knows everything necessary to advocate coastal issues
2. Other Congressional people are waiting in line to view our problem and our Congressmen are occupying their seats
3. Everything is static in coastal Louisiana in that, what one saw a year ago will be the same today
4. Using National Guard resources for helping in battling the encroachment of the Gulf is not a worthy endeavor

This problem is so large and complex, no single science discipline or engineering specialty can begin to deal with this problem. No one person, through formal education or life experience, can predict with certainty what will happen and when to our coast and our communities. We do know that if we deal with this issue intelligently, we will deal with this problem more efficiently.

None of the elected officials have experienced our coast like the people who have spent generations on the land, water and marshes of South Louisiana. The trip, along with hopefully many others, by air, land or sea will help change awareness of the problem to informed advocacy. Informed advocacy is what our Congressional Delegation can use to educate and persuade others of the need for immediate action. The more our Congressmen experience, the more they will sound like an educator and less like a lobbyist. Washington has more lobbyist than straws in a haystack. Someone who has true understanding and experience can stand above the politics. It separates officials looking for port from those looking for solutions.

It is that understanding of the issues which will help convince other congressional and executive branch delegations to visit and better understand and experience the problem. At those times the seats will be provided to the people that you suggest in your column.

Our coast changes exceedingly fast. In fact, that is why our problem is so severe. Our coast, land and marshes are so vast that after years of studying maps and flyovers, there is always something new to learn.

Using National Guard resources to help highlight our land loss issue could not be more appropriate. We are using a great deal of resources to avert a possible terrorist attack. Using a few resources to deal with the certainty of land loss and hurricanes appears very appropriate.

The editorial ends with this question: “It might be a nice trip to take—particularly if the weather is nice Wednesday—but can’t we think of a better way to spend our leaders’ precious time and our State’s precious resources?” The obvious answer is No.

It is not a serious problem if newspaper employees do not understand that this flyover is important. We must be thankful that our local legislative delegation understands that we cannot tell our story enough both to our own people and outsiders. And it is truly an interesting story whether by air, land or sea.

/s/ Windell A. Curole  
General Manager

/s/ Ronald Callais  
President

WAC:mp