Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 29, 2013

Colonel Richard Hansen, Commander
New Orleans District
United States Army Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Hansen:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement. This region plays a vital role in the national economy supporting key navigation and energy industry assets such as the Port of South Louisiana, the largest volume port in the Western Hemisphere, and a number of major oil refineries. While we are encouraged by the progress that has been made on the feasibility study, we have serious concerns about the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) and urge you to carefully review the merits of Alternative D before submitting your recommendation.

Alternative C, with an expected cost of $881 million, will provide structural protection for 16,919 structures and four miles of Interstate 10. This cost estimate includes $305 million for non-structural measures outside the levee system that will protect 1,571 structures in the communities of Gramercy, Lutcher, and Grand Point. While Alternative D is projected to cost $10 million more, the levee system will encompass 4,921 additional structures and 11 more miles of Interstate 10. Supplemental, related benefits noted in the study for areas inside the levee system include higher property values, increased tax revenues, and a greater potential for economic growth.

Furthermore, in accordance with the authorizing language, the study area is confined to St. Charles, St. John the Baptist and St. James Parishes, wholly excluding the benefits afforded to businesses and residents in Ascension Parish that will also be protected under Alternative D. It is our understanding that this could include another 5,000 housing units and 13,000 residents, and we encourage you to make note of these associated benefits that have not been factored into the Benefit-Cost-Ratio calculation.

We recognize the Army Corps of Engineers' commitment to fully funding the feasibility study in the current fiscal year and support your efforts to complete this study in an expeditious manner. Throughout this public comment period, we know that you will determine and recommend the alignment that produces the maximum return on investment, and we look forward to assisting you in that process.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

David Vitter
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress

Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress