

United States Army Corps of Engineers

7400 Leake Avenue
New Orleans, LA, 70118

CONFIDENTIAL

Date of Meeting: APRIL 29, 2009

Opening speaker: So, if this is too crowded for you, Monday night at 6:00 p.m. we're going to start a meeting at the Belle Chasse Auditorium. Same situation, so if you don't want to be crowded in here tonight, we just added that meeting because we found out so many people are coming here. So, Monday night at the Belle Chasse Auditorium, if you prefer to have a little bit more room; we'll have that meeting for you.

[00:45 – 00:16 Background noise and people speaking in background.]

Mark McGee: Okay. Could I have your attention, please? Obviously, everybody wants to, kind of, kick this off. I guess there's a few stragglers coming in the door back there, possibly? All right. Hi, I'm Mark McGee [Phonetic 01:28], I'm the spokesperson for Oakville Community. Our President, Allen Green [Phonetic 01:35] is unable to attend this evening, maybe in a little later. At this particular point, we're going to introduce Reverend Curtis Carroll for the evening prayer. Thank you.

Rev. Curtis Carroll: Amen. Could we just bow? Oh, Father, we thank you Lord, that you've allowed us to sit here and assemble ourselves in a peaceful manner. While we come concerned about the things that are going to be engaged in shortly, we just ask you to touch the hearts of those that are in authority today and as you touched their hearts and their decision making, Lord, that this as a community, Lord, and what's best economically as well, Lord, with that is best for the people, as well. We just ask that you would invoke your presence in their minds and their thoughts in the things that we'll do here today, and that this will stay peaceful assembly. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Meeting attendees: Amen.

Mark McGee: All right. Before we kick things off, here, I would like to bring you up to date a little bit. This is about our third meeting locally, here, where we're discussing this levee and enlargement and this gating of the highway, etc. There is many new faces here that are, obviously, had some renewed interest in this project and I would just like you to know that our representatives of the Corps of Engineers are here and there is many people in their division that are going to be able to answer all of your questions. They have been very attentive in making sure that everybody gets their questions answered and you're not going to have any problems. You may not get the answer you want but you will get your answers. Okay. So, right now I'm going to introduce a Mr. Jim Taylor [Phonetic 03:27], representative of the Corps of Engineers and he'll take over from here. Thank you.

Jim Taylor: Thank you. We're pretty crowded in here. We thought about moving outside. Problem with that is the exhibits and presentation and stuff just isn't going to

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work. We are going to re-do this meeting Monday night at the Belle Chasse Auditorium and we will cover everything we're going to cover tonight and there we'll have the opportunity to get into more detail on the non-federal levees further down in Plaquemines Parish. So, if that's primarily what you're interested in, Monday night would be a good chance to really get into those details we will cover. Again, everything we are covering here tonight we'll cover Monday night at the Belle Chasse Auditorium.

I want to thank the St. Paul's Benevolent Association for allowing us to have our meeting here. I'm sure if this were a Sunday morning they'd be really happy to see this crowd. I know that the Parish President couldn't be here but Janice Acosta, his Admin Assistant, is somewhere in the group, and Linda Vanta [Phonetic 04:37], the Chair of the Parish Council, is here, and I don't know if there are any other Parish Council members here. If there are would you raise your hand? Okay. I'm going to introduce, eventually, everybody from the Corps; we have a lot of technical people here. We also have Colonel Alvin Lee [Phonetic 05:00], the District Commander for the New Orleans District, and the two people that are going to be making presentations tonight, Ted Carr [Phonetic 05:07], the project manager for the Hero Canal Eastern Tie-In project, and Bill Malase [Phonetic 05:14], as a project manager for the non-federal levees in Plaquemines Parish. I think Bill is here. Okay. And, I don't know if you can see him but, Ken Hollier [Phonetic 05:26], the Public Affairs Officer for the New Orleans District, is here. Ken just took over that job about a month ago. And, when you came in you met Sharon Robles and Melissa Beil [Phonetic 05:37], and Sharon is running the slideshow, and Melissa is going to be taking minutes, notes on the meetings, which will eventually be posted on our website. So, when you do get up to speak, please make sure you state your name so she can keep everybody straight. We've got Mike Honeycutt [Phonetic 05:54] here from FEMA who will be able to talk about flood insurance issues. Colonel Lee, if you would like to say a few words, please.

Colonel Alvin Lee:

Thank you and I appreciate everybody coming out this evening. This is, in our vernacular, we have the National Environmental Policy Act and part of that act is the public process and this is part of that public process. As was stated earlier, this is the third meeting we've held in the Oakville Community to discuss the project and what its intended purpose is, and really tonight is to give you an update of where we're at. We've been working this project for quite a while, a lot of interaction between members of the community, local governments and state governments to come up with what we call the preferred alternative. So, that is what will be presented here tonight and then later tonight it will also allow you an opportunity to give your public input, and as Jim talked about, you'll be able to come up to the microphone and give us your comments and ask questions about the project and we'll be glad to answer those. We have quite a few of our technical members here that can answer those questions and we encourage you to answer the questions and make public comments. We'll stay here until we get

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finished and that's my commitment to you. I do want to introduce a couple other members, my peers, from other districts in our region, Colonel Bob Sinkler [Phonetic 07:34] is from the Rock Island District up in Rock Island, Illinois, and Colonel Mike Wier [Phonetic 07:39] is the Commander of the Vicksburg District in Vicksburg, Mississippi. So, I just want to let you know they're here and they're just here, really, to see what we're doing and how this all works from a public process. And, again, I really encourage you to engage and submit your public comments to us and I know it will probably take some time to work through the crowd that's here tonight but that's okay. We're here to listen to you and it's important that your voice is heard. So, thank you very much.

Opening speaker: We're going to get started in just a second here. Because we've got so many people and it's going to be hard for people to hear, we ask that when you do get to the question and answer, you come up to the microphone or if you can't make it up there we'll try to get one to you. But, please hold your questions until both Ted and Bill [Phonetic 08:32] have finished their presentations. A couple of reasons, they may answer your questions during the presentation, and just as importantly, they may give you some ideas for additional questions or comments. So, if we can hold the questions until after they give their presentations, it won't take long, and then we'll open it up for discussion. So, Ted, you ready?

Ted Carr: Well, it's good to see a lot of people I saw at the last public meeting but I must claim, we have a few additional faces in the crowd. Okay. So, why are we here tonight? What we want to talk about is the proposed action to reduce risk of the communities of Belle Chasse and Oakville and other areas of the West Bank. The project will connect the West Bank Vicinity portion of the project to the greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. So, this is the West Bank portion of the tie-in to the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. Ultimately, we call it the Eastern Tie-in, the final project the ties-into the Mississippi River Levee. We also want to do a brief status of the Plaquemines Non-federal Levee to give you some information on that. So, we also are here to get your feedback.

Okay, can I have the next slide, please? I just want to, kind of, do a little bit of background. The Plaquemines Parish Risk Reduction Features are authorized by separate congressional authorities. What we have, in getting to the details of the 1996 Water Resource and Development Act, we basically, authorized the West Bank and Vicinity Hurricane Protection to areas east of the Algiers Canal, extending from Belle Chasse including Oakville into Plaquemines Parish, basically the tie-in to the Mississippi River Levee System. 2006 Congressional authorized the New Orleans to Venice, that's the Plaquemines Project, the non-fed levee in Plaquemines. This was to reduce risk from Oakville from about two miles north of St. Jude in Louisiana. So, that's the southern part. There's two systems, that's important to know. Okay. So, if we look at what we're talking about tonight, we're down here, here's Oakville, and there's IER 13 which is out

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for public review at this point. It will be open to public comments to May the 4th, which is this coming Monday. It's made up of two projects. It's made up of a project that is on the north side of the existing Hero Canal which is a project to raise that portion of the levee. The other portion of the project is what we call the Eastern Tie-In and what that is, is a new project, that's to tie-into the Mississippi River Levee through the community of Oakville.

Next please. Okay. Colonel Lee did mention the need for process; this is a very important part of what we do. The National Environmental Policy Act, or we call it NEPA, it's required of all federal actions. What we want to do here is make sure that we've analyzed potential impacts of the human and natural environment and investigate reasonable alternatives. Public involvement is key and that's why you all are here tonight. Your input is key to this process and it's designed around your input. The goal, the more informed decisions that we are able to make through public involvement, ultimately, the better system and the better project we end up with. I'm going to show you a good example tonight from our last meeting of what public involvement enabled, and then also, the IER 13 document which documents this process. Okay. This slide is intended to show that there's a number of steps that you can do to, as we say, buy down risk but the important part of this slide is down here, and that is that there will always be residual risk. You can never eliminate risk completely. You can do things that minimize the risk.

Okay. What I'd like to do is talk about IER 13. We've already mentioned this a little bit. The two portions of the project, here is the GIWW West Closure Complex, here is the Hero Canal Levee, and this is the Eastern Tie-In. This is the Mississippi River. So, the proposed action that we're talking about is to raise and expand the existing Hero Canal Levee. By the design elevation, the 2057 design elevation for 2011, is 10 ½ feet, and construct the tie-in levee to the design elevation of 10 ½ feet as well. This will connect to the GIWW West Closure Complex which is right here. So, basically, we go from the IER 13 connects with the GIWW West Closure Complex and ends here at the tie-in to the Mississippi River Levee. Next please. Last time we talked when we were together, we talked about the seven different alternatives. What I want to talk to you today about is alternative one which we said is our proposed action which is described in IER 13. What I'm going to do is I'm going to walk you through some of the features of this project. Up here on Hero Canal, we have a 56 foot stop log closure for the navigational log Hero Canal in the event of a storm. So, I'm going to give you a little bit of background on that. From there we basically go, this is Levee, I think a lot of people here have seen Levees, so I'm not going to go too much into this but, this is Levee all the way to here. In this corner right here, there is a pump station. It is a rather small pump station, as pump stations go; it's 150 cubic feet per second.

[Faint speaker in background. 15:12]

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Ted Carr: Okay. I'm sorry. The mike kind of drifted down. Let me bring it back up. Thank you. If you can't hear me, let me know. Okay. Thank you. Let me just start over at the Hero Canal to make sure that everybody heard. Okay. Let's start up here at the Hero Canal. I'm going to talk about a navigation structure.

[Fain speaker in background. 15:37]

Ted Carr: Yeah. Why don't ya'll come on up? Actually, we have some chairs up here.

Opening speaker: You're welcome to stand up here. You won't be able to see the slides but if you have a copy of the handout you can follow with Eric [Phonetic 15:49]. So, there's room to stand up here.

[Background noise. 15:50 – 16:10]

Ted Carr: Okay. Come on in. There's lots of room. We've got a couple more chairs up here. We've got another chair right over here.

[Background noise. 16:27 – 16:30]

Opening speaker: There's room up here in the front if you want to come all the way up to the very front.

Ted Carr: If people would like to stand in this area up here or in this area up here, you're welcome to do it. Just find a spot where you'd like to be.

[Background noise. 16:40 – 16:57]

Ted Carr: Okay. You finding places? Just a reminder, probably a good thing to talk about, and that is if there is an emergency in this building here, there is an exit right here. This is an exit as well as in the back there is an exit. You guys have found that one, you may not have been aware of this one.

Unknown speaker: This back door is sealed shut so don't make an attempt to go out the back door.

Ted Carr: Okay. Are you all going to come on down? Standing there may not be good because people behind you may not be able to see. But, I welcome you to come and stand over here. Okay. Can you hear me now in the back? Are we ready to get going? Okay. Let me know in the back if you can't hear me. I got thumbs up.

[Faint speaker in background. 17:57]

Ted Carr: We have three more seats up in the front if you'd like to sit down in the front. If there's any Corps people sitting down, will you please let your seat to one of the members of the public, here. Any Corps members sitting down, please give your

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seat to a member from the public. We've got one seat up in the front, we've got two more seats in the front. We've got two more. We've got one more. We've got one right here. Anybody want to sit right here? Okay. It's hot in here, isn't it? Okay. Well, we've got two seats. There's a seat here and I'm going to get going, you're welcome to come down and sit. There we go. Okay. Let's get going again.

What I want to do is I want to start up here at the top and I want to start talking about the Hero Canal. The Hero Canal, in the proposed action what we have, is the 56 foot stop closure. That would be closed in a storm event. I'm going to show a little bit more detail about that as we go. From the Hero Canal to the back of the landfill and running along the landfill and down to the trailer park, that is all levee, it is basically reinforced earth and levee. In this corner right here is a pump station. It's relatively small, it is about 150 cubic feet per second pump station. It's small by standards, it's quite a bit of water it's pumping but it is designed to remove the water that accumulates behind the system. Basically, from the pump station to right about where Captain Larry's is, that is continued reinforced earth and levee. At the point right here, it transitions to a flood wall. Then what we do is we cross Highway 23 with flood gates; we cross the railroad with the flood gate; then it transitions back to levee and ties-in to the Mississippi River Levee. That's the basic system. I'm going to give you some more details now on the Hero Canal stop log structure and talk about the gates across Highway 23 and the railroad.

Okay, next. So, what's a stop log gate? Basically, a stop log gate is constructed in the canal. It's a concrete structure with a, in our case here, it has a 56 foot opening. That's what will have to fit through that 56 foot structure, traffic would now transition through that and in the event of a storm, this permanently mounted crane would install these, what we call, stop logs. They're not wooden stop logs, at this point, we use metal box trusses. But, there would be two or three of these that we would place into special slots, and I'm going to show you that in the next slide, that would close the canal.

Okay. Let me have the next slide, please. I'm going to wait until we close that door because that slide is; come on, come on in. Okay.

This is at IHNC, the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, we did a de-watering project earlier in the year, and this, basically, gives you an idea of how a stop log would work. If you look in this lock there are some recesses in the concrete walls. This is a stop log. These ends would fit into these recesses in the walls. And, basically, through a series of seals, and piling a stop log on top of a stop log, we would then effect, basically, it's like a dam in the Hero Canal. Okay. So, a proposed action includes construction of a stop log gate across Hero. There are two to three metal stop logs that we use to close the canal, and the stop logs

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would be placed 72 hours prior to an event. So, once we're notified of an event, 72 hours we would begin placing those stop logs.

Next slide, please. I told you I was going to give you an example of feedback. For those of you that were here last time, we were talking about a bridge and a ramp and a series of access roads at Highway 23 as part of this project. Based upon your input, in close coordination with the Coastal Protection Restoration Authorities, CPRA, DOTD, Department of Transportation and Development, as well as Plaquemines Parish, that was strongly looked at and arrived at a proposal to put in these gates that I was talking about earlier. So, that's a great example of how public comment can influence a project.

Okay. Next slide, please. So, how do these flood gates work? Okay. Let me just orient you, here. Here's Highway 23 South; here's Highway 23 going north; this is the Mississippi River Levee. This is part of the levee system that transitions to a flood wall, and this is part of the flood wall right here on the other side of the railroad tracks that goes in a flood wall that transitions into the Mississippi River Levee system. So, then there is two, basically, designs that we're looking at. We're looking at what are called swing gates, and we're also looking at another design called roller gates. I'm going to talk to you about both of those. So, basically, these gates, this swing gate, would be stored on the back of the flood wall, and then as these indicate, they would then close. Let me see the next slide and it will show you what they look like closed. So, basically, this gate has swung closed, this gate has swung closed and that closes across the highway. And, this gate right here is the railroad gate, that basically swings closed, effectively now closing off the system. Okay.

Now, because this is an emergency evacuation route, we wanted to provide access to authorized vehicles, even when the gates were closed. So, there is an emergency bypassing that, basically; there's a fly, flying around, can anybody claim that? [Laughter.] Okay. There's a private road, on Mr. Landrum's [Phonetic 25:53] property, there's a road that has a railroad gate, a railroad crossing, that's a private road right now, it then would transition up onto the Mississippi River Levee System and then come down on East Oakville Street. So, when the gates are closed, that would be, essentially, a bypass around the gates. So, authorized vehicles could get around the closed gates.

Okay. Let's look at a roller gate. Okay. A roller gate is a little bit simpler. This is the roller gate, how it is stored, basically, is on rollers, and a series of seals on the bottom that effectively make the closure. So, since we've been through this, let's just go ahead and close it. So, here it is. The roller gate, basically, transitions across, it rolls across, as opposed to swings across, and here the railroad gate is still a swing gate, and that's closed, so, effectively closing the system. You still have the same emergency bypass. Okay. So, basically, what we have is, we've talked about the Eastern Tie-In. What I want to do now is I

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want to turn it over to Bill Malase [Phonetic 27:11], and here is the existing non-fed levee, and this is where it currently ties-in.

Unknown speaker: Before you turn it over, you might have some questions on the first slides, there.

Bill Malase: We'll get to them.

Opening speaker: We'll get to those. Go ahead.

Bill Malase: Let me briefly give you a status, a general description, and the status of the West Bank non-federal levee, first, and then we'll get to the questions. First, on the status of that; excuse me, can you hear me?

[Faint speaker in background. 27:47]

Bill Malase: Okay. Can you hear me, now? Okay. The status of the Plaquemines Parish levee is that there are multiple alignments under investigation using the criteria, including what you see up here, risk reduction for people and infrastructure, protection of Highway 23, and concern for the potential adverse impacts of the environment. Also, the authorization limits the potential of alternatives to repair or modification. Next slide.

Opening speaker: Next slide.

Bill Malase: Okay. This is the, and for those that came to the February, two months ago, we had a public hearing on this project, for those that came to the meeting, this map will look familiar, but generally, this is the trace of the West Bank non-federal levee. The existing levee is what you see here shown in blue, basically, the outside rim, and then the last two miles, there are no levee. So, this is 34 miles of levee, 32 that exist, and two miles that will be constructed.

Next slide. So, where are we now on the status of that project? Is that, the draft supplemental environmental impact statement is in progress. We discussed this, I think, at length at last public hearing. The next item would be the record of decision, then the project partnering agreement would be negotiated, and the acquisition of a right way, and the construction would begin, and we'd look for construction to be complete in late 2013 or early 2014. And, that completes the status and the general description of the Non-federal Levee.

Ted Carr: Okay. We have one more slide.

Bill Malase: Oh, thank you for the pointer.

Ted Carr: Okay. What I want to talk about it the modeling that's been done looking at lower Plaquemines. Basically, what this is; so, what we've done is we have two

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separate projects. Now, what is the impact of these projects on each other?
Okay. So, the Eastern Tie-In flood gates reduce storm surge and associated wave risk to the Belle Chasse area. That's what it does. Okay.

[Multiple background speakers. 30:28]

Ted Carr: Okay. The West Bank and Vicinity project, including the Eastern Tie-In flood gate, would not create additional flood risk to lower Plaquemines Parish when the Parish non-federal levees are completed.

[Multiple background speakers. 30:43]

Ted Carr: Okay. I know is going to create the questions. And, so I think we're about ready to move into that. So, hold your questions. We're going to just do a little formality here and then we're going to get into the questions.

Opening speaker: Okay. Let's start with the question and discussion, now. I would ask that you come up to the microphone and since there's so many people, maybe just line up behind the person ahead of you, and try to keep your comments to three minutes so everybody's had a chance to make a comment or ask a question, and then you can come back up and do it again. That way everybody will have a chance to speak tonight. So, please state your name so that our recorder can make sure we got the comments to the right person.

Dana Thompson: My name is Dana Thompson, and I lived about four miles down the road, down in Belle Chasse.

Opening Speaker: Can you hear back there?

Dana Thompson: You might call it, Jesuit Bend, but it is Belle Chasse.

[Cheering and applause]

Dana Thompson: I would like to know, what is the height of a non-federal levee.

Opening Speaker: We've got a number of.

Female engineer: The question is what is the height of the non-federal levee.

Dana Thompson: The 100-year levee, if I'm correct, is 10.5 feet, right? For 100-year protection? Right, up here?

Bill Malase: The non-federal levee, the elevation, at its point of connection to the federal levee that's down at [Unintelligible 32:09], by St. Patrick's Church, down at this point.

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Dana Thompson: I don't see any cities on there, so I don't know what that is.

[Faint background speaker 32:25]

Bill Malase: Right. This is the map that I showed you the existing levee on the outside, and the two miles of the 34 miles that does not have levee.

Dana Thompson: Okay.

Bill Malase: No, which is the St. Jude.

Dana Thompson: Let me, I'd like to shorten this conversation, okay? In Jesuit Bend, what is going to be the height of the levee behind that neighborhood?

Bill Malase: That's not been determined, yet. But, at its initiation of the NOV Hurricane Protection at St. Jude, it's 12.6.

Dana Thompson: Okay. So, you're saying 12.6 by Jesuit Bend.

Bill Malase: And, I'm telling you, it's not been determined above Jesuit Bend.

Dana Thompson: And, then 10 ½ feet here. So, why not just tie it in and continue, and put the gate where the wave problem is down the road.

Bill Malase: That's a hydraulics pump.

[Cheering and applause]

Bill Malase: That's hydraulics pump.

Dana Thompson: That's a what?

Opening speaker: Hey, could we hold on a second so we could hear the question and hear the answer and maybe if we hold our applause until it's done, we'll be able to get through this a little quicker. But, we've got to be able to hear and I know you want to hear the answer.

Male engineer: What was the answer?

[Multiple background speakers. 33:41]

Female engineer: Okay. I'm going to try to answer the question on the why go forward with the flood gate and not, at this time, consider moving it further south.

Dana Thompson: That's not my question. My question is what is the height difference? Because I work in engineering and I know that if you add on to a project and you've got

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labor there already building the levee, and what's two more feet? And, then a gate down the road will stop the wave action. I got flooded from a wave action. Oakville did not get a wave action. Why are we protecting them from a wave that doesn't exist?

Female engineer: Okay. I think the answer to the questions is what the elevation of the levee, the non-federal levee that will be improved and brought into the federal system. We don't know the final elevation, yet. It's still under design, we're still in the environmental.

Dana Thompson: We are in final design, according to Billy Nungesser.

[Inaudible 34:29 – 34:32 Multiple speakers.]

Opening speaker: Let's let her answer, okay?

Female engineer: So, as we continue to engage the public and inform you, when we know what that number is, we'll be able to provide that information. At this time, we don't know what that elevation is. Now, what we have completed, the other project, the West Bank and Vicinity project, and I appreciate that it doesn't protect specifically the Jesuit Bend neighborhood, that project was authorized by congress many years ago. I mean, that's just the way the court gets its authority. We get congressional authority and we will not complete the construction of that piece of the West Bank project. When the hurricanes hit in 2005, congress appropriated funds so that we can now complete that project, so that's why you're seeing the movement and the progress on the West Bank project, and then also the non-federal levee being brought into the federal system. So, they're two separate projects, so we have to manage them as different authorities, different funding, and then they're both working themselves through a design, a NEPA environmental compliance process.

Dana Thompson: Different authorities, did you mean who's going to let the projects for these levees?

Female engineer: No, when I say authority, I mean the way the Corps of Engineers gets permission to expend dollar and to construct projects is specifically congressional authority.

Dana Thompson: Okay. Well, I just think that we can save a lot of tax money if you just hold off for a little while before you build millions and millions of dollars worth of flood gate that's not going to protect a lot of population down the road. In all these things that I've read here, IER 13, I'm being called a cow. I'm not a cow, I don't live on a farm, and I pay big taxes here. That's all I have to say.

Opening speaker: Thank you.

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[Applause]

Opening speaker: Now, next please. Go ahead.

Stanley Gaudet: Stanley Gaudet, I live in Jesuit Bend. When I look over some of your literature, and I like to quote from Colonel Lee's [Phonetic 36:25] letter, in order to comply with the 100-year risk reduction and elevations and design criteria, the Eastern Tie-In project must cross Highway 23 and tie-into the Mississippi River Levee to close the system to be certified for participation National Flood Insurance program. Now, by saying that, that indicates that us on the outside of the levee, although I don't think it's true, but that's one of the things that we are concerned about. We are told that we're going to keep our flood insurance but yet in this letter, the perception is there, that it's going to be better for the people north of the levee.

Opening speaker: That might be a question that our FEMA representative can address.

Male FEMA rep: You've got me at a loss, I'm not sure what letter you're talking about.

Stanley Gaudet: A letter from Colonel Alvin Brown to, the Mr. Nungesser, President Nungesser.

Male FEMA rep: Okay. So, that is not a letter from FEMA?

Stanley Gaudet: No.

Male FEMA rep: Good. Let me explain FEMA's side of it. Flood insurance is available to anyone. So, no matter whether you're at the one percent, or you're not at the one percent, you know, flood insurance is available to anyone.

Female speaker: If you can afford it.

[Multiple background speakers. 37:43]

Male FEMA rep: Depends on what your risk it.

[Multiple background speakers. 37:46]

Opening speaker: Hey, let's let him answer the question.

[Multiple background speakers. 37:53]

Male FEMA rep: I'm going to tell you that FEMA did. You know, FEMA has been working very closely with the Parish, you know, with our flood maps. Now, Billy Nungesser, the council has been terrific, you know, working with us. FEMA has not required Plaquemines Parish to adopt anything, you know, from the maps that we have provided to them because we know the levees are not there.

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Background speaker: Not yet.

Male FEMA rep: Not yet, that's right. You know, what the Parish decided to do, which was a terrific option, the Parish chose to continue to use their advisory base flood elevation on the upper portion, and to leave Plaquemines with its current maps. That does not affect your current insurance. It will affect insurance down the line, in the future, could be 2011, 2012, 2013, whatever it may be.

[Multiple background speakers. 38:45]

Male FEMA rep: I can't answer that. That's, you would have to know what it would be in the future.

Opening speaker: Well, let's, if you want to ask a question, ma'am, why don't you wait. Let me give everybody a chance to speak.

Male FEMA rep: But, it's difficult, you can't give an answer to what your flood insurance may go up or what your flood insurance may go down because many of these individuals with this flood protection, you're going to have cheaper flood rates. Some of them may not.

[Multiple background speakers. 39:17]

Male FEMA rep: Depends. Don't laugh at me, I'm serious, here. You're going to have better insurance. You know, if you have a better system, you will get lesser rates. You're not going to get more rates because of a better flood protection, and I doubt seriously if you're going to have higher rates. You're going to have rates that are currently existing right now. If you're in a A-flood zone, currently, and you're continue to be in an A-flood zone, your rates are not going to change. The elevations may differ when somebody builds a new building but it's not going to change your flood rate. It'll only change your flood rate if you go from an X zone into a higher risk zone of an A, and, to my knowledge, everything in lower Plaquemines, right now, is an A. I don't know if anybody's a B, you got some B-zones?

[Multiple background speakers. 40:05]

Male FEMA rep: A, E, A, A, E, same thing, same thing.

[Multiple background speakers. 40:09]

Male FEMA rep: Do what? So, you've got a B-zone? Okay. So, and you've got a B-zone, too. And, in some cases, if that does change to an A, then yes, your flood insurance is going to increase. Yes.

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Opening speaker: Let's let this gentleman answer the other part of his question, ask the other part of his question.

Male FEMA rep: Your flood insurance will increase, yes, that's a fact.

Opening speaker: Go ahead, sir.

Male FEAM rep: If that's the case, that's a fact, it will increase. You're in a higher risk.

Opening speaker: Mike, we got another; finish this.

Stanley Gaudet: One of the things that you're going to be tying this in to a non-federal levee and we are in a process of getting our non-federal levee adopted. Why not, I find out that the Corps moves exceedingly slow, they started in 1985, and a lot of the decisions to put this here was based on data that is no longer pertinent to this.

[Applause]

Stanley Gaudet: And, if we can tie-into a non-federal levee here, why can't we tie-into a non-federal levee south of the Alliance Plant where we would be protecting one of the major refineries in the United States?

Female engineer: I think I'll start into the question this way, I mean, the answer is, is we've been authorized by congress, and it is our goal to provide the protection for the West Bank project that's already been authorized, that project is moving forward. We don't want to not construct that project but at the same time...

Opening speaker: Let's listen to the answer.

Female engineer: ... we're moving on an additional project. So, the answer is both projects are moving forward. They're not on an identical timeline but both projects are moving forward.

[Multiple background speakers. 41:46]

Opening speaker: Okay.

Stanley Gaudet: That is one of our concerns, and the next question is, I want to know that on May 4th, when we have the final meeting, our comments are going to be taken seriously, and we may have an impact on possibly changing. What you're saying is it's going to go forward, is it going to do us any good to do that? I found dealing with the Corps of Engineers and having worked with FEMA, common sense, even though it might dictate moving this levee down the road, common sense with the Corps and with FEMA is not all that common, in my affirmation.

[Applause]

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- Female engineer: Okay. The reason, we've not made the final decision on the project that's described in IER 13, you know, we've not made that final decision. We're still in the public input period. That is currently scheduled to close on May 4th, I think it is. We'll evaluate the comments that we receive at that point, and then if we have enough information, we'll move to a final decision or we'll continue to gather information and input. So, the final decision on IER 13 has not been made. And, the reason, our goal is to continue moving forward that project is because we don't see the construction of that project having an adverse affect on the future protection or the existing situation in the Parish below that.
- Opening speaker: Sir, go ahead. If you want to make a comment, we've got the opportunity at the mic.
- Lewis Hammer: My name's Lewis Hammer [Phonetic 43:12], I live in Jesuit Bend. There's probably a million people that want to make comments about this levee. I'm a volunteer fire department member and everything pretty much south of Port Sulphur is gone for any major hurricane, and we cover, we stay here, we volunteer, we stay here, we cover everything. When you put that gate up, how are we suppose to respond to anything south of this gate? Because I guarantee you, as a volunteer, I will not take a truck that's holding 500 gallons, that weighs four, five, six tons on to a levee that's saturated with water, that could break, that may have water coming over it to get around to rescue somebody down here.
- Female engineer: Okay. I can tell you two things, specifically, we're doing to address that concern is, first off, we're going to automate or power the operation of that gate so that gate will not have to be shut until toward the event happening. You know, it'll be able to operate when the winds are blowing at 100 miles per hour. So, the point is, that gate is going to stay open as long as we can, with consideration for the folks that have to operate have to also be evacuated safely. So, that's one thing we've done to address that. And, secondly, we are putting this emergency...
- Lewis Hammer: That's what I'm address right that is that emergency road. It's a gravel road that goes on top of the levee. Right now, when we have to do something on the battering side, it takes us very careful maneuvering to go down the levee as it is. You're asking us, last hurricane, when we had our major flooding, the flooding came over the levee, so you're asking us to use a service road for all the rescue people over a levee that may flood that will not, possibly, handle a heavy pumper truck, and say, okay, everything south of this gate, you know, we're sorry, if it burns, it burns, if it's gone, it's gone.
- Opening speaker: Well, that's important information, and that's part of the reason we're having this meeting is we can take that back and include those comments in our analysis, so.
- Lewis Hammer: You know, I mean, that just hurts us down there.

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Opening speaker: Okay. Thank you.

[Applause]

Butch Kelly: My name is Butch Kelly, I live in Jesuit Bend. Were there any type of impact studies done after Hurricane Katrina concerning the areas south of the Oakville flood gates as far as impacting property values? This area's grown quite a bit since 1996 with a large influx of people. I haven't read anything where the people south of Oakville have been taken into consideration of the impact of this flood wall. So, can somebody answer that question? When was the last study done by the Army Corps of Engineers or by anybody else concerning, have you done anything recently or is this all based on 1985's original impact study?

Female engineer: I don't know that we've done any additional, we normally do a study to evaluate benefits of a project. The situation we got in where congress acted in absence of that study. Congress took a position and said, let's provide additional risk reduction and raise the non-federal levees without performing that survey. Okay.

Butch Kelly: Okay. That's fine, but.

Female engineer: In other words, there was no need to prove that the benefits outweighed the cost to construct it. Congress just said, you are authorized.

Butch Kelly: Reasonable people are going to ask questions, why hasn't it been an ongoing study? Things change, things don't remain the same as 1985. You can go back and do a study in 1910 and say, well, we're going to do it because we studied it in 1910. Now, why isn't something going on as far as impact study currently, the population?

Female engineer: Okay. You talking about a study for the property near Jesuit Bend or below Oakville?

Butch Kelly: Everything below Oakville, all the way down to Venice, Louisiana.

Female engineer: We're going to move into construction phase on both of these projects. There are still other programs...

Butch Kelly: Well, you've got to answer my question. When was the last impact study done concerning the population and property below this flood gate? Now, you're saying this was authorized in 1985.

Female engineer: The IER document does that, as well, for the Eastern Tie-In project.

Butch Kelly: But, I have not seen anything where there, any impact study is done concerning the population growth of the Jesuit Bend area.

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Female engineer: The EIS, that's supplemental environmental impact statement, that first milestone that Bill Malase talked about, is currently being developed, will be put out for public for public review, I think, in the summer of 2009, will have that assessment information in it.

[Multiple background speakers. 47:51]

Butch Kelly: Well, wait, but that's not going to help. When you going to break ground on this thing?

Opening speaker: Okay. The question was, when will construction begin.

Female engineer: Is the question, when will construction of improving the non-federal levee being?

Buch Kelly: No, no, Oakville.

Female engineer: Okay. The Oakville, the Eastern Tie-In project is currently scheduled to go to construction September of this year, 2009.

Butch Kelly: Okay. So, where is the impact study that's going to affect the people after September 1st, 2009, that's south of the Oakville flood gates? What kind of things are we going to have to be prepared for if we are impacted by a major hurricane?

Opening speaker: When will the EIS be out on that, then?

Buch Kelly: It sounds like to me, nobody, you can't answer the question because there hasn't been a study done since 1985. I mean, is there somebody that can answer the question? Just tell me yes or no.

Female engineer: [Inaudible 48:43 Multiple speakers.] Here's what I'm saying, there's two reports that are being published. One is IER number 13.

Butch Kelly: How does that help us being published? We need to know now.

Female engineer: Well, it's out, you know, it's accessible on our website. We can provide you a hard copy of that document. That document...

Butch Kelly: What does that document say?

Opening speaker: We'll give you the link to the website.

[Multiple background speakers. 49:01]

Butch Kelly: I don't want a link to the website, I want somebody to tell me what does this impact study say? Are we being sacrificed? Is that what's going on here?

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[Multiple background speakers. 49:11]

Male engineer: I'm [Unintelligible 49:12], I work in the Environmental Group, I'm the Chief of the Ecological Planning. What Julie is trying to say is, we have two separate projects. You're talking about the '85 studies and that, that were done for the West Bank and Vicinity.

Buch Kelly: That's correct but you're saying the '85 study is the major.

Opening speaker: Let him finish, I think he's getting the answer to your question.

Male engineer: Right. So, that study has been done. Congress said, after Katrina, here's the money, go build that. Then they also said, here's the money, now go build and bring that non-federal levee system into the New Orleans to Venice federalized system. That study is ongoing, we're preparing an EIS for it. Our anticipated date to get that out is late summer. That will take into account the analysis from Oakville, south.

Butch Kelly: Well, don't you think that we ought to put this thing on hold until that study comes out to see what the affects are to us?

[Applause]

Male engineer: I think Julie tried to answer your question and it gets back to the authority question. These are two separate projects and we've tried to communicate that to you. Corps of Engineers does not build any project without congressional authorization. So, that's our permission.

Female background speaker: We understand that.

Male engineer: Well, that's what I'm trying to explain to you. Would you please let me answer the question.

Opening speaker: Just let him answer the question.

Male engineer: Would you please let me answer the question. Thank you.

Female background speaker: He's not answering our question.

Male engineer: There is an authorization that gives us permission to build projects. Congress gave us permission, we showed, if you can go back to the slide that shows the West Bank congressional authorization. I think its slide number two or three. Right here. This is what gives the authorization, and authorizations give limitations within those authorizations. So, they give you permission first, and then they tell you where you can do it. Where did it go?

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[Multiple speakers in background. 51:13]

Male engineer: I want to go back. Authorizations are never outdated. There are authorizations that are dated back to 1927. Whenever congress passes an authorization, that is the date of the authorization, it has nothing to do with what today's date is. These authorizations specify where this is, West Bank project, to provide hurricane protection, and then it specifies the areas, east of Algiers Canal, extending from Belle Chasse to, and including, Oakville, Louisiana and Plaquemines Parish. So, that is Oakville, Louisiana and Plaquemines Parish and that's where the authorization gives us authority to tie-in the levee to the Mississippi River Levee system which is the East Tie-In part of this project. There is a separate authorization for the non-federal levees and the New Orleans to Venice levees that is separate project that was authorized by congress in 2006. Both those projects, after Hurricane Katrina and Rita, were funded by congress that gave us authority and funding to complete both those projects.

Female background speaker: You're still not answering our question.

Male engineer: I'm sorry. That is how we operate. That's our authority and permission that congress gives us to build the projects, and that's how we operate within that authority.

[Multiple speakers in background. 52:48]

Opening speaker: Now, let's, okay, let's move on to the next question and try to keep this going so everybody has a chance to express their ideas.

MaryJo Hebert: My name is MaryJo Hebert from Port Sulphur. I think everyone in this room understands the way you get your authority and the way you get your funding. Okay. The question that most people in this room have is, since this authority was given in 1996, well, according to what's on the screen, he's talking about the actual authority. Okay. If this was given back in 1996, what have you done since 1996 to prove to congress that it's still necessary to put a flood gate in Oakville? That's my first question. The second question is, obviously, the flood gate is necessary because there are parts of our levee system that are not federalized and are not up to federal standards. They do not meet the 100-year protection levees. So, wouldn't it make more sense to bring all of our levee system up to the 100-year levee protection height before you build a flood gate. Once you get the levees up to the height that's necessary to give us the flood protection we need, then your flood gate maybe absolutely unnecessary. If you put the flood gate now before the levees go in, what you're doing is, the areas of the levee that are so low, where the water comes across anytime a small storm passes behind us, what you're doing is you're trapping all that water south of Oakville, and that includes the people of Jesuit Bend, that includes the people in

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Oakville, and that includes all of everyone south of Jesuit Bend, and contrary to what people believe, there are a lot of people that live down there.

[Applause]

Female engineer: There's just one small point I just want to clear up because I know there's a letter circulating that the Corps didn't produce that says, the Eastern Tie-In was authorized in 1986. The West Bank project is large 66 miles of levees and flood walls, a piece of that was first authorized in 1986, it basically stopped at the Harvey Canal. So, that's the 1986 study and authorization. In 1996 congress added everything east of the Algiers Canal. So, 1996 is correct for the authorization of everything east of Algiers Canal.

Okay. So, I think your fist question was would have we done since 1996 when we were authorized. There's been construction along the Algiers Canal, the Hero Canal has been raised, now it needs to be further raised, more work to bring it up to the 100-year but every year congress appropriates a certain amount of money. With those monies, we start constructing the whole system. The Eastern Tie-In was one piece that no construction had taken place, then in 2006 congress fully-funded the amount of money to finish what was already authorized. So, that's why we're now able to finish this system that was first authorized in '86 and added to in 1996.

MaryJo Hebert: Okay. If it took that long to get the funding, do you really think it would affect congress that much to hold off on construction until you did another study or until you got the rest of the non-federal levees up to 100-year protection?

Female engineer: Okay. Right now, because there's nothing here, that's a gap in the system. Okay. So, everything in this whole area is at risk of flooding, so is everything south of the area. But, we're going after this with two projects concurrently. First project says, you have to close this system at this point to protect all the property which is solely in Plaquemines Parish against that 100% levee protection, and then to address the risk south of that, moving forward with that second non-federal levee project.

MaryJo Hebert: That's great, except if you get a major hurricane in between, you're starting the federalizing the levees long after you're starting construction on this flood gate. So, what you're doing is you're leaving that entire lower end of this Parish open to flooding from those areas that the levees are below the standard system.

Female engineer: Right. You're correct, there are two different timelines and this is the reasons why. Authorization already existed, funding was provided, additionally we were allowed to do certain expedited processes for NEPA. In other words, funded permission, environmental compliance was expedited so we could move. Because there had to basically be more evaluation and study and environmental

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assessment to this area where no construction had been done before, that process is just, kind of, trailing behind the other project, you know, by several months to a year. That's why you're going to see your supplemental EIS document later this year and construction will come online six months, maybe a year, after we start construction of the other project.

Opening speaker: Can we give somebody else a chance now, and then maybe you can come back.

MaryJo Hebert: Just one more thing, and then I'll give up the mic. You said six months to a year behind but according the papers you passed out, the flood gate will be completed in 2011, and the levees won't be completed until 2013 or 14, so that's not six months to a year behind.

Female engineer: Right. And, I was just speaking in general terms as far as where in the process we are now. You're correct. Our current schedules are 2011 for the Eastern Tie-In, and late 2013 for the other project. That is correct.

Opening speaker: Before you start, we have a lot of people that want to speak tonight, so if we could try to keep it down to three minutes. If you've got more questions, we'll be here after this is over, and we can talk to you individually or as a group. So, let's, go ahead, if you would, please.

Male engineer: One moment, I'd like to intervene for a moment, please. I'd just like to explain to all of you all why it's getting a little loud in here that it's very important to get your comments documents accurately. This is a comment period. Being associated with the Oakville Community Group, I can tell you that these comments will have some positive input with the Corps and those people above their chain of command that could possibly have some positive benefits for you. So, you need to be accurate on your comments, you need to be quick, and there could be some positive things come about this. Thank you.

Robin Zuvitch: Yes, my name's Robin Zuvich . My questions, first of all, I've been trying to educate myself. Within the last few days of this IER 13, I do have a question in section 3.1 of the environment. My husband came and **[Inaudible 59:53 Speaking too low.]** Our question has a PowerPoint that goes with it but, unfortunately, we were told when we walked in that, from somebody in the Corps, that this is a public building that you rented, it's your public meeting, and that, we never did this before, so could someone override that person and allow me to be the first one to do something like this? I will keep it under three minutes...

Opening speaker: Let's wait until we get everybody done.

Robin Zuvitch: ... my husband can set it up while others are talking, would that work, and I can get back in line? No?

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- Opening speaker: We want to keep this up so we can go to slides but as soon as we're done with that, at the end of the meeting...
- Robin Zuvitch: No, I want it now when my people can see this, sir.
- Opening speaker: Well, then, maybe we can do something separate but we're not going to stop the meeting for that, now.
- Robin Zuvitch: I don't want to stop the meeting, I want to get it set up and I will go back in line, and I will wait my turn again, sir.
- Opening speaker: But, go ahead and ask your question. If you have a specific question.
- Robin Zuvitch: My questions pertains to my PowerPoint. I'm a school teacher.
- Opening speaker: Okay.
- Robin Zuvitch: I believe visual will help all these people.
- Opening speaker: And we can do that once we get all the other verbal questions, so.
- [Multiple speakers in background. 01:01:01]
- Opening speaker: Okay. We're not going to do this now. Let's keep this orderly, please, and we will do it...
- Robin Zuvitch: I would like it go down that I have been refused to...
- Opening speaker: ... we'll be happy to do it after the...
- Robin Zuvitch: ... a question in section 3.1 in the environmental section. I want it to go down that I've been refused.
- Opening speaker: And we're perfectly happy to do that.
- [Applause]
- Opening speaker: Next, please. Next, please.
- Unidentified male speaker: Thank you. A couple of points that I believe need to be clarified. And, there's a lot of confusion, a lot of misinformation circulated. First of all, I want the public to understand that this gate has not bee in the works for any 10 years. This gate has bee in the works, for perhaps, the last six to nine months because this authorization that we keep talking about going back to 1986 and then 1996, in the original project, the levee terminated at the levee, the local levee, on the other side of the Highway. Is that correct? So, the gate is something relatively

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new, in the last six to nine months, as an alternative trying to tie-in the 100-year protection. Now, I think that it's crucial and, you know, I've been in here six or nine months ago saying exactly the same thing about, the two projects need to talk and work together. The 100-year protection stopping at Oakville, and all of these trips that have been made to Washington needs to emphasize that we need 100-year protection all the way to Myrtle Grove. As we said a little while ago, there was no alternative on the levee alignment in Jesuit Bend, unless you go to the northern part of the property, the southern part where there is no levee, below La Reussite. So, I believe that we could have skipped and taken the \$215 million dollars that was first allocated and used it on that levee and we'd of been hauling dirt a year ago. But, the main thing that Colonel Lee and your staff say, and don't have the authority, you can't go to 100-year protection at this point, below Oakville tie-in. I think that it's important to have this local government seek that authorization for 100-year protection through congress to give you that authority and not just make trips but ask for what is needed. The budget has gone from 215 million to 600 million for this project, and that has been done by authorization, appropriations through the congress, and each time money was added, that language could've been added to extend 100-year protection from Oakville to St. Jude. Now, having said that, I'd like to make sure that the public comes to the Monday meetings, put on your thinking cap over the weekend, and do some constructive criticism or at least questions some construction questions and direction so that we don't get into a contest of pointing fingers. The solution is, just as I stated, congress needs to authorize and tell the Corps that we want 100-year protection of the 600+ million dollars to extend to Arlington or Myrtle Grove, for many reasons including the refinery and the community there.

The other thing that is important is that we shouldn't be distributing misinformation. When I read this first letter here, it says that this project was started in 1986 and the path had already been finalized. We wouldn't be here if this was finalized. This is a public meeting to get input and it shouldn't mislead the public here to say that it's finalized or we're wasting our time.

[Applause]

Unidentified male speaker: So, having said that, I am hoping that we will be able to get congress to give you that authority to be able to complete the project, and as we talked about the elevation not being very much different between the northern tie-in and the southern tie-in, the money that could be used for the gate could actually be used on the levee. So, having said that, I want to thank you for being here. I also want to thank you for, at least, mentioning the two projects in the same meeting because before tonight, we couldn't talk about the two projects in the same meetings. So, we are making some progress where we are talking about the same project. Even though it's been a miniscule amount of information on the non-fed levee project, at least it's being discussed. So, with those comments, I hope that you can go back and take into consideration the comments of the public tonight

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and look at the possibility of that happening, and do interim protection so we don't have to build the gate at this time. Thank you.

Opening speaker: I can guarantee you, we absolutely will take all these comments back and consider them. That's why we're here, and the more focused and factual the comments are, the easier it is to incorporate them in the studies that are going on. Go ahead, ma'am.

Gene Guerrero: Hi, my name is Jean Guerrero, and I live in Jesuit Bend Estates, also. You know, we're trying to show you all, for you all to understand, this is just not cow pastures or citrus groves that you all have written down in your report whether it's in the '80s or the '90s. You all, whoever, we were, are able to build down there, someone gave us, why didn't they stop us then, okay, from building? Not let us all build beautiful expensive, we're not talking about little shacks that my family grew up in down the road. We're talking about 300, 600 thousand dollar homes. And, what where we're concerned is, yes, we're going to put up a fight, it's not going to stop until you get common sense wise in here and see that, first of all, don't start the flood gate until you have that levees up, then maybe consider a flood gate. But, this flood gate is really, is really for the Corps, a quick and easy thing just to say, oh, we got authorization way back in the '80s, okay. Authorization can be stopped, okay. It doesn't, it can't just go on when you have people here, also now, and studies should be done now to show that we have people, we have businesses, we live down here. Most of us, my family grew up down here, and that's why I moved down here. Had I known that they would've had a flood gate up across the road, I would not have moved from Algiers Point down here. I moved from Algiers Point to get away from the crime and be down where my people all came from, and that's why we did that. And, so, why should this go on? Why can't you all just give, we can't ask, you can't answer anymore of our questions because we don't really get an answer. It's simple. Stop the flood wall, stop this flood gate which, for one thing, is going to also devalue our homes. There ain't no sensible person going to want to take and pass a flood gate to go buy a home when you all are going to have this ridiculous flood gate, started going up now in 2009, and we have no levee protection, yet. That's really ridiculous.

Opening speaker: Okay. Thank you.

Gene Guerrero: It really is.

Opening speaker: Just comments, moving quickly.

[Applause]

Gene Guerrero: One more thing.

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Opening speaker: Quickly, please.

Gene Guerrero: Really, that's when you really get on people's nerves when you say that.

Opening speaker: You have a lot of people standing behind you.

[Multiple speakers in background. 01:08:56]

Gene Guerrero: And, you know what?

Opening speaker: Wait and speak.

Gene Guerrero: Hey, we can be here until 12 o'clock at night. We don't care. Let's face it...

Opening speaker: Go ahead and ask your question.

Gene Guerrero: ... wait...

Opening speaker: Go ahead and ask your question, please.

Gene Guerrero: ... you said, no, as a comment. You said you paid for this building? Who actually paid for it was the tax payers that you all put out the money to rent it for, okay. That's another thing, okay.

[Multiple speakers in background. 01:09:25]

Gene Guerrero: I had a senior moment. I might have to come back.

Opening speaker: Okay. You can come back. You can come back.

Gene Guerrero: Oh, another thing is, everybody in here is not going to leave until they are able to show their aerial view up there.

Opening speaker: Absolutely.

Gene Guerrero: Okay.

Opening speaker: We'll do that, absolutely.

[Applause]

Pete Stavrose: My name is Pete Stavros, and I have a couple questions. First of all, is there somebody, anybody in the Corps that's here, that lives south of this gate? Okay. Is there anybody here that did the economic assessment portion of the IER? The **[Unintelligible 01:10:09]** that, this past week, was, there's a comment in there that the area and the environment of this proposed IER 13, the term is, was cows

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and fruit trees, and the answer was that all that you had to look at was a mile within that structure, in that structure. Was that something that appears in the engineering regulation or was that just an arbitrary number?

Male engineer: The section you're referring to, refers, that was written to refer to the property directly adjacent to where that levee is being planned in Oakville. Now, it was not a description of all of Plaquemines Parish or lower Plaquemines.

[Faint background speaker. 01:10:52]

Male engineer: I'm just telling you, I'm one of the, I'm one of the principle authors of that document, the intent was to discuss the area directly adjacent, I'm talking, right up touching it, which is Mr. Perez and **[Inaudible 01:11:09 Speaking too low.]** property.

Pete Stavrose: The problem with that is, it talks about economic impact, and according to your old regulations, you have to follow the National Economic Development plan or you waive that in lieu of this project.

Male engineer: The NED has been waived on both of these projects since Katrina.

Pete Stavrose: That's a problem. That is a problem for all of these people who found out two weeks ago that their economic development has just been affected.

[Applause]

Male engineer: But, it is being address in this second study. That's the purpose.

Pete Stavrose: There's a problem because...

Male engineer: Congress recognized that there was a need to look further south and they gave us that authority and they went, actually, went one step further and actually funded that.

Pete Stavrose: I understand. The problem is, is that congress reads a report that says, the only thing south of that project is cows and fruit trees. They read that, they do not come down here and see that.

Male engineer: Congress already authorized this project and funded it.

Pete Stavrose: That's a problem.

Female engineer: Let me try and say it this way. The NED that you're referring to is a process the Corps typically has to go through to justify its spending federal dollars on a project. That's been decided already, the money has been appropriated for both projects already.

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Pete Stavrose: The problem is how it has been used. That money needs to be used to protect these people down here, develop the economy, not to gate us up and to impact, not only our safety, is there somebody here, a hydrological person?

Female engineer: Yes.

Pete Stavrose: Okay. What we got, over the phone calls that happened this week, was that there was no hydraulic or hydrologic impact due to the construction of the 16-foot levee on the Hero Canal and this terminus. The problem is, and I don't know, I didn't see if any of the documents on the website, if there was a hydrological study. It's not being published. The problem is, and I am not a hydraulic engineer, but I am smart enough to know that any water that comes up the Barataria Basin, if we restrict that flow from any of the areas inside that 16-foot area, add to it the fact that you're going to shut off the intercostal waterway, shut off that Hero Canal and pump, even at 150 cubic feet per second, that's going to affect the static level on this side of that levee. That level is going to be higher. Not to mention, any of sort of dynamic action against that levee is going to double back on us two miles south of here when the levee is only five feet tall. We came within one foot, because I was out there pitching sand bags in the last storm, of that levee topping, and that levee, with all the Haskell baskets until kingdom come, is not going to hold, even for one semi-serious storm that hits over in Texas, between that time that thing is closed and the time our federal levee, but less than 16-feet, is built.

Female engineer: And, that is the reason why, Bill Malase, we talked about his presentation, indicated that the non-fed levee, the elevation has not been determined because we do have to take into account any impact that the Wester Closure Complex...

Steve Stavrose: I will tell you, right now, that, that project has induced risk of flooding to my property, and you are, by law, required, by NEPA, to do an EIS, to show me what that impact is. And, you either avoid it, you reduce, you mediate it, or you scrap it.

Female engineer: Yeah, I agree.

Steve Stavrose: And, that hasn't been done, and that's why I'm angry, and that's why everybody else here is angry is because we're at risk.

[Applause]

Male engineer: In the case of what you just said about the EIS, I want to correct something, we have the authority, since Katrina, to do these IER's, that taking the place of an EIS. So, we are meeting the full NEPA compliance on this. We are doing a full EIS on the lower Plaquemines, the non-federal levee.

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Opening speaker: And, we will take your comments back and evaluate them. We still have some
[Inaudible 01:15:28 Speaking too low.]

Steve Stavrose: For the record, I personally think this is substantive comment, a substantive issue that affects me now, will affect me when I flood and I have drywall cut and I can't get natural flood insurance protection because we're on the outside of a levee, and that project is scrapped because they could spend 700 million somewhere else.

Opening speaker: Okay. Thank you. Got it.

[Applause]

Frank Renatza: I'm Frank Renatza, I live about eight miles south of here, and my family been here almost 70 years, now, okay. So, we've been around here a long time, and we've seen a lot of hurricanes, okay. And, yeah, we had some damage from other hurricanes but Katrina opened the eyes of everyone, okay. So, yes, we are in trouble, okay. The back levee there, where I live, is about seven feet high and it's not enough because we were a foot, right about a foot from coming over the levee. What happens if another hurricane comes and hits **[Unintelligible 01:16:34]**, Louisiana, and builds the water and it backs out of our levee and pours over the back side of that levee? We're going to get flooded. Insurance, I heard this gentleman talk about insurance, okay, with FEMA. You know what happened when Katrina come along and my insurance tripled on my home? What happens if people who are, have fixed incomes, retired, don't have money? What are they going to do about insurance on their homes that they already paid for? Okay. They can't afford the insurance of what they're being charged.

Male engineer: You're saying your flood insurance tripled?

Frank Renansa: Well...

Male engineer: Flood insurance did not go up.

Frank Renansa: Let me finish. Okay. Listen to me.

Male engineer: Homeowners is a different story.

Frank Renansa: Well, I was called in...

Male engineer: Homeowners, I wish there could be something we could do about homeowners.

Frank Renansa: Let me finish. I know you want to comment on this.

Male engineer: Yeah.

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Frank Renansa: I was told, by my insurance company, I've been with this insurance company for 47 years, okay, same insurance company. They call me on the phone and said, Mr. Renansa, you bring me a check for \$1600.00 right now or we're going to cancel you. I said, why? He said, because we're going to have to change your policy, now you're going to have three policies. I said, why do I need three policies? Okay. So, I got insurance, wind and hail and flood, okay. My wife and I are retired, okay, we're living on a fixed income. I got a beautiful home, yeah, I worked for it, okay. Nobody gave it to me but we don't know if we can continue to pay for the insurance on what we own. What happens when you put this flood wall up here, which is going to be a mess, okay, you folks make it sound like it's going to be a simple thing, we're going to close the flood walls 72 hours ahead of the hurricane and you all will go around the bypass to get out of here, okay. You are creating a mess that we're going to have to put up with when you people leave here. I know all you people here, none, I bet none of you all live here, okay. Every person here, these folks, these folks right here, live here. This our home. We all live below what you all are going to propose to be a flood wall, okay. Going to put it up there, going to spend all this money and create a levee and a flood wall up to separate lower and upper Plaquemines Parish. We are all Plaquemines Parish people.

[Applause]

Frank Renansa: You should not separate the people of this Parish with a flood wall. You're creating a mess, okay.

Opening speaker: Those are the kind of comments we will definitely take back...

Frank Renansa: I know, I know you're wanting to cut me short, but I have one more thing to say.

Opening speaker: Okay.

Frank Renansa: Go back to the slide here where you showing where the levee is going to go and the air base is, okay. They got a slide on here that you got where the levee comes in where the air base is, it showed exactly where it was at. Keep going backwards. One more, come on, come one, backing at them, before that. You showed where the levee came and the air base. Now, everybody look here where the levee comes and how it goes around the air base, okay. That was put there purposely to protect the air base, okay, which is a great air base, okay. We have protection right here by the back door, okay. But, that's the reason why that levee was put there. They don't care about anybody else or any other part of the Parish goes below that, they got to put that flood wall up there.

Opening speaker: We absolutely do care about what's important to you, that's why we're here.

Frank Renansa: No.

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Opening speaker: And, that's why we're doing that and that's why we're recording these comments and going to take them back. So, we do care.

Frank Renansa: Once you put this flood wall up, I don't know if I'll be able to get insurance on my house once this FEMA gets finished with my insurance.

Opening speaker: I understood.

Frank Renansa: Okay. I didn't know coming about, this is my first meeting, and I apologize that I'm not more knowledgeable on what's going on, okay. So, this is my first meeting but I can tell you one thing, it's not going to stop, okay, because everyone in this place here is going to work to stop this program if we can. Okay.

Opening speaker: Okay. Thank you.

[Applause]

Kevin Johnson: Hello, my name is Kevin Johnson, I serve as the District Commander here with the Sheriff's Office. This is my district, from Belle Chasse to Myrtle Grove. I have three beautiful daughters, I just built my house in Jesuit Bend, and I worked very hard to get here. This being my home town and having to scrape and scratch and live in other Parish's that were disgusting as far as the way they treat their people, and the same, so that's my passion. I'm going to cut this short real quick and let you know, I just want to address you real quick, sir, you with the Corps, I believe you're with the Corps, sir. And, then I just want to address all my townfolk, that I tell you what, I'm touched with the turnout. It makes me so proud to live here. Number one, sir, you gave me a little comfort, I really, I want to believe you. I really, I mean, everything in me wants to believe that all these recorded statements are really going to do something, that's the first thing.

Opening speaker: They are.

Kevin Johnson: There's the light, well, mark that up, they are. Number two, I'm an educated man and I tend to do a lot of speaking events. I was in a lot of debates and as a police officer for 14 years, I read body language. Pretty good, I think, so well. And, sir, your body language, from the engineer, you're talking like a man that's carrying a big stick, that's pretty much waving it saying, people it's coming, it's coming straight up, we got the authority, and I understood what you were trying to explain but just reading where you're coming from, hey, kindness is spoken and you were getting a little frustrated, that's what I was reading. To my townfolk, I'm telling you all, I get privy to conversations that really aren't open to this, you know, the conversations behind closed doors where, actually, truth is spoken, and I have friends in higher up positions and God has blessed me with them to confide in me, and I'm not speaking names or any such, but any of you

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all know me, know I'm not lying, I'm telling you all right now, what I'm being told is this is done. Listen, let me just talk because I just want to fuel the fire, give me a second on that. I am being told that these next few meetings is lip service, and come May, they're looking to shut the books hard on this. I'm telling you, that's what I'm being, and the people that told me this, it was three of them, they told me, you know, it's worth fighting for, you need to at least make a statement. And, it's back to you. We're making a statement by being here. I'd like to know what you all's meeting is like before this building filled up because I know hineys had to be puckered and you all, man the parking lot's filling up, a lot of angry people. Let me ask you something, do you all think, do you all, honest to God, think we have a chance, and I'm not talking projects and getting into details, I think we've made it pretty blunt, and you all have really lot a lot of this debate on lack of, I don't want to say knowledge, but a lack of being able to answer questions, do you, to put it blunt, we don't want to flood gate. I mean, I understand all these other things, and everybody's pretty much, the flood gate and the financial bomb that is about to get dropped on us. Now, do you believe, I'm asking you all's opinion, do you believe we have a chance? And, I don't want to hear, oh, man one millionth of a chance, that's not what I'm talking about, a legitimate chance that this flood gate, come May, this last meeting, that it's not going up? Or do you believe it is more probable than not, people in this room and people who are stuck outside, it's coming and it's done? I'd like of you all, I mean, you all, I'm in the meetings, too, before the meeting, so I know the tone that's set, and I'm asking you, what is that tone? Can you share that?

Male engineer: Well, you know, I think we to communicate what the purpose of the meeting was, was to present the preferred alternative, and so, this is what the proposed action. So...

Kevin Johnson: This is what's going on again. I'm not getting frustrated, I'm trying not to get frustrated the best I can. Sir, I understand what you all's purpose of your meeting is, unfortunately, it's not the same purpose everybody showed up for. Okay. They already know what you're throwing up.

Male engineer: Right.

Kevin Johnson: That's why everybody's here. So, more or less, their motivation for being here is to make that not happen. Not to try to fall in love with it, they already hate it, nobody wants it. So, my question to you is, what is the chance? Is there a chance? You're in those meetings.

[Applause]

Kevin Johnson: You, when you spoke about your authority, you were really showing me the fact that it's coming. Look, we've been told to do this, this is our authority, and it's

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almost like, I felt like, you know, let's drop the financial bomb on the island to save the townsfolk up north, you know, and that's how I felt.

Male engineer: Well, let me, first of all, you know, we received quite a bit of comment this week, before this public meeting, that's why we put on another public meeting Monday night, and that was a discussion we had internally in our organization because we heard there was a lot of public comment that needed to be heard.

Kevin Johnson: Please give your opinion on my question.

Male engineer: I can give you...

Kevin Johnson: Is there...

Male engineer: ... this is our proposed action...

Kevin Johnson: ... is there more probably than not that this will not happen?

Male engineer: I would say it's pretty probable right here. This is a proposed action...

Kevin Johnson: There you go. This is what I want to explain to everybody...

Male engineer: ... however, there...

Kevin Johnson: ... this is not just a, let's throw it out to you and let's talk about it. It's at the end, so nobody be **[Inaudible 01:26:43 Multiple speakers.]**.

Male engineer: Let me finish the answer.

Kevin Johnson: It was an answer.

Male engineer: I just told you this is a proposed, that doesn't say a final action. A final action means that I am the decision maker, I've signed my name on a document saying, this is the way it will be built exactly as it's specified here. I have not done that, and I won't do that until after the 4th of May when the public comment period ends, and all the comments come in, we assess all the comments and evaluate them. And, so, that's where the decision is made. So, the decision has not been made.

Kevin Johnson: Who is the final authority.

Male engineer: I am.

Kevin Johnson: You are the final authority?

Male engineer: I am the final authority.

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- Kevin Johnson: Well, that's a good one to know. I didn't know that, did you all know that? The man with the final authority is right here. Well, I applaud you for being here, I really do, thank you for being here.
- Male engineer: Thank you.
- Male engineer: Okay.
- Male speaker: And if, honestly, if it doesn't, would you buy my house?
- [Laughing]
- Male engineer: Well, you know, I really appreciate you coming, and I thank everybody for coming. The, you know, the purpose of this meeting is for you to tell us how you feel, not that it's going to make us feel good or bad or whatever. We need to know what you're thinking, what you like about this project, what you don't like about his project so we can take that into account as we make a decision. That's the whole purpose of why we're having the public meeting. So, thank you.
- Opening speaker: Go ahead, please.
- Vaughn Boudreaux: Vaughn Boudreaux, and I also live in Jesuit Bend. I have a question.
- Opening speaker: Could we quiet it down a little bit so we could hear, please.
- Vaughn Boudreaux: I'm not going to sit up here and chew you out about it but, from your hydrological person, what affect does blocking off the Hero Canal have on that surge coming in? Because I know during Rita, where the levee was five foot, the water was coming over in Jesuit Bend and me and a couple of my neighbors, here, we spent 20 hours sandbagging it, and I tell you what happened that saved us was, the Hero Canal because a lot of that, they were able to open the locks to the river and a lot of that river went up the Hero Canal and went through the Harvey Canal and so forth, and drained, and took the pressure off. At one point, I remember, the water was coming up about six inches an hour, and it was topping that levee, and we were bagging it as fast as we could and parts of it was washing out. And, then the Parish president got in touch with Jefferson Parish and they opened up some of the flood gates or some of the locks in the river and that allowed the water, and it started dropping, and that's what basically saved Jesuit Bend is that, was coordination the Parish had with other Parishes and they opened up those gates. How does the Harvey Canal, I mean, the Hero Canal being blocked affect that ability? Does it or does it not?

[Multiple background speakers. 1:30:14]

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Vaughn Boudreaux: My question is, is does the Jefferson Parish line tie-into that blocking of the Hero Canal?

Female engineer: The Jefferson Parish?

Vaughn Boudreaux: Well, the levee coming from Jefferson Parish.

Female engineer: Yeah, the Jefferson Parish levee.

Vaughn Boudreaux: So, that's going to be a wall across there, correct?

Female engineer: Right here.

Vaughn Boudreaux: Okay. So, the water is not going to be able to go up the Hero Canal anymore?

Female engineer: It won't go up to this terminus here, yes, correct, when this project is finished.

Vaughn Boudreaux: Okay. So, it will, okay, so, it has nothing to do with the hydrology in Jesuit Bend and the ability of Jesuit Bend to drain, correct? That's all my question.

Female engineer: Correct.

Vaughn Boudreau: Okay. Thank you.

Matt Zuvitch: Yeah, my name is Matt Zuvitch, I'm Robin's husband, the one you all told we couldn't show the PowerPoint presentation. I did come here earlier today and asked about it and the girl I talked to said that she never had anybody want to do anything like that at a public meeting like this. I said, well there's always a first, and I know she has her own computer and I told her I had my own equipment, if I need to. But, what I want to tell you people is, before these people go out and spend millions of dollars to do another study on what we have below Oakville, get on Google Earth, like I did, for about 15 minutes and pull up and you can see what they have down there. You can see the middle school, you can see the nursing home, you can see the refinery, you can see all of our subdivisions, and all the people who live down in this area. But, you all are talking about doing another study which is going to cost a lot of money and a lot of wasted time. So, that's my comment, basically. Before you go out and waste a bunch of money, I'm not a computer expert. I mean, those aerial shots probably would've taken off the same place that I got mine from.

[Multiple background speakers at once]

Matt Zuvitch: One other thing, it's not just about the people that's in the room tonight, we all have kids, and what do you think their future is going to be behind this wall? You think they're going to raise a family down here? Do you really? You. It's your decision to make, you told us that. You going to make the decision that's

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going to affect our kids whether they want to stay in this Parish below this wall you all want to put up. So, when you make that decision, think about if you had kids living down here, how you'd want them to feel. All right. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

[Applause]

Amos Cornier: My name is Amos Cornier [Phonetic], my family comes from Plaquemines Parish, going all the way back to the 1700's, and I would just like for you to carry one message back to congress. And, that is the historical corporation of Plaquemines Parish with the Corps. We have sacrificed our land, we have sacrificed our livelihoods through orchards and groves that we have been given, that you have taken set-backs from the river, and of course, we have your cooperation. Now, if you will go back and check in 1927, you busted a levee at Myrtle Grove and Plaquemines Parish was sacrificed. You blew up the levee at Caernarvon and the east bank of Plaquemines Parish was sacrificed. If you put this up, then the entire Parish would be sacrificed, again. Thank you.

[Applause]

Ryan Martinez: My name is Ryan Martinez, I'm a resident of Jesuit Bend. I'm almost at a loss for words because Kevin took pretty much all the words out of my mouth. I was asked to ask one particular question, who is going to have the authority to close this gate?

Female engineer: It will be constructed by the Corps of Engineers and we have a partnership with the state of Louisiana. Once the construction is complete, it's turned over to the state of Louisiana to operate and maintain. It will be under the guidance of the Corps of Engineers by providing them an operations and maintenance manual. So, you know, we will, you know, as we design the gate, we will put forth perimeters that describe when the gate should be closed but the actual operation of the gate will be by the state of Louisiana.

Ryan Martinez: So, there's no local input on when the gate should be closed?

Female engineer: Well, we have a coordination team that meets through the planning and design of this project, and Plaquemines Parish government participates in that coordination.

Ryan Martinez: The other thing is, I'm still a little confused because this gentleman says that all of our comments are going to be taken back to Washington and reviewed. But, this gentleman says that you all already have the authority. Maybe I'm not as smart as everybody else in here but I want some plain English. Is this a done deal? Yes or no?

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Female engineer: The final decision on what will be constructed for IER 13 has not been made.

Ryan Martinez: So, there's still a chance that this wall may not be built at all? Yes or no?

Male engineer: Let me explain the process.

Ryan Martinez: I don't want you to explain the process, I want a yes or no answer. Yes or no?

Male engineer: I can't give it that easy. When the public pays, as soon as it ends, we, in the environmental group, will put together a packet with the team and we'll work through it. We'll look at all the comments and everything, the team will make a recommendation to Colonel Lee. Colonel Lee then weighs the comments, looks at them, reviews them, he makes the decision.

Ryan Martinez: So, it's not a done deal?

Male engineer: It's not a done deal until, as he said earlier,...

Ryan Martinez: That's enough.

Male engineer: ... until he signs, when he signs the paper, but that decision has not been made.

Ryan Martinez: The main thing I'm trying to get at is, I want to make sure we're all not wasting our time and that our comments are going to be reviewed.

Opening speaker: Your comments are going to be incorporated in the final decision, absolutely.

Ryan Martinez: Well, I want my comment to go on record that, I think I speak for everybody in this room, we don't want it.

Opening speaker: And, that's come through loud and clear.

[Applause]

Donald Landry: My name is Donald Landry. I don't know how the public was notified that we were having these public meetings but, you know, I just found out about it Sunday, and I've lived down here for 25 years, I grew up in Belle Chasse, I've lived all my life in Plaquemines Parish. So, you know, seems like somebody dropped the ball. An issue this important should have been house to house, you know, knock, knock, we're building a flood gate. That's my first comment. I did pull up Google Maps, somebody suggested, and I went down and I counted houses as best I could, and there's over 600 houses from where your proposed flood gate to the alliance where the Salt Water Diversion Project comes across the highway which is a natural levee to the highway. So, there's well over 600 houses, there's 50 trailers, I counted 50 trailers in those two trailer parks, I didn't count individual trailers that are spotted within, but 600+ families you're

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impacting. My other question is, I'm a little confused as to your 1996 authorization. Did it or did it not include this flood gate?

Female engineer: Okay. What was authorized in 1996 is a project and it's in alignment. The project is not through its final design phase, so it doesn't identify, you know, this thousand feet will be a levee or this thousand feet will be a flood wall or a flood gate but it basically identified this area, I know it's difficult to see on this map, but his area, east side of the Algiers Canal, and the community of Oakville, it authorized that, that area would be provided hurricane protection.

Donald Landry: Because I'm confused, Benny Ruso [Phonetic] read through a document and said that, that levee was going to tie-in with the non-federal levee and not include a flood gate. So, it sounds like to me, the answer is no, the original authorization did not authorize a flood gate.

Female engineer: The original authorization language did not describe a flood gate.

Donald Landry: Okay.

Female engineer: That's correct. It just said provide protection and go forward and design how to accomplish that.

Donald Landry: Protecting property and person. Okay. So, my comment on that issue would be to not build the flood gate. Okay. Second question, I would like to recommend that the final date for this, since I think most people in this room just found out about it this week, that the final date for May 4th be postponed by one month, at least.

[Applause]

Donald Landry: Okay. I think we need a better study and a better, some more and local state, I don't see anyone here representing local and state, okay, representing us. They're suppose to be our representatives that give you direction in to what your project should include. Is that not correct? You all get direction from congress, right?

Female engineer: We get our authority, which we, you know, described, the permission comes from an act of congress, yes.

Donald Landry: Right, right. So, I would recommend a postponement at a least a month that we can get our state and local authorities involved with our congressmen and get this impact looked at.

Opening speaker: Now, we have at least one council member here but you're right, it would be good if all of them could show up.

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Donald Landry: **[Inaudible 0137:15 Multiple speakers.]** said he couldn't come. I called Charlie Melacon and he couldn't make it tonight, he's not going to make it to the May 4th meeting, I mean, we don't have representation here.

Opening speaker: And, they need, you need that.

Donald Landry: And, they need to be here. So, I would recommend postponing this drop-date deadline which construction ain't going to start, realistically, on this flood wall for probably another year, right? So, I would recommend that, September? Okay. Another question I had and it was kind of confusing, is this project, I think most people here are from below Oakville, is this project going to increase our risk, i.e. flood insurance premiums by what this man just said, is this project closing the flood gate across this wall going to increase our risk? Yes, no?

Female engineer: I'll answer the question the best way I can tonight. The construction of that flood gate, we do not believe, based on the modeling we've done so far, will have any noticeable appreciable increase to the amount of storm surge that would, you know, come to those areas south of the flood gate, and...

[Multiple background speakers at once]

Female engineer: ... any amount of increase, we're going to continue to do modeling to define what that potential increase is.

Donald Landry: After the gates built or before it's built?

Female engineer: We're going to, that's ongoing work now. And, if we can indicate that there is an increase, then the design of that levee that will be behind the Jesuit Bend area will be, the design will incorporate that.

Donald Landry: Okay. I guess that answers all my questions. Thank you. Thank you for you all coming out to night and at least hearing us. I appreciate it, thank you.

Victoria Taylor: My name is Victoria Taylor and I live on Wilson Street. I just want to know why you all didn't decide to put that flood gate further down where properties have been destroyed all ready and residence are not as plentiful as we are here in this room tonight?

Female engineer: The short answer to that is, if I move that gate any significant distance, adding a lot of, I don't have the environmental compliance for that, it's out of my permission that I have from congress. I would've had to get additional authority. Now, that can still happen in the future but we're just moving forward with what we've already been authorized. So, to move the gate would've taken additional congressional authority.

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Opening speaker: Please, let's let her ask the rest of her question.

Victoria Taylor: Well, to follow that, did you get our permission to invade our homes and our livelihoods here with your decision making? Did you do that? Because I can tell you that I built my house in 1993 and you're telling me on that paper right there that in 1996, you made this authority happen. Well, you know what? I wasn't ever notified by certified mail, I was never sent anything in writing, and the first thing I hear about this is tonight. When I get home and get a flyer in the mail about my flood insurance may not be eligible, I may not be eligible for FEMA, and you know what, I make a phone call to my insurance agent and he tell me, if I'm not eligible for FEMA and flood insurance, my homeowners insurance is going to go through the roof. I'm a single mom and I can't afford all that! What are you all going to do about it?!

[Applause]

Gene Guerrero: You all know me by now, Gene Guerrero.

[Laughter]

Gene Guerrero: And, I'll take another three minutes, and if I have to, I'll go back and take another three more. You know, you're closing MRGO, all ready, right now. That you all opened up over there that my friend's families, way back when, had begged you all not to do. Now, it's created a mess. You ruined a whole Parish over there. What are you going to do? Is this what's going to happen now? Because, really, it looks like you all's attitude, it's like, you all don't care, you got authorization and money. You all, you know, really, congress, blows money out of their you know what's all the time without any thought or anything of what's going to happen or this or that. That's why you've got a lawsuit right now with Mr. Go that people did, that is putting, that's making you all close it, now, okay. Which is making more money, billions of dollars now, to close that, that you all made millions of dollars before that to open it.

Opening speaker: And, that relates to this?

Gene Guerrero: Yes, it does.

Opening speaker: Okay.

Gene Guerrero: Because, well, why wouldn't it relate to it? Because, that's what's going to happen right here. You all are not studying anything, you all just keeping going like, well we're just going to keep on this until, and while we're studying along, okay, really? Why don't you all try and use some common sense for a change? You know, the people, right now, everybody in Lakeview, all over, can't stand the Corps of Engineers. Why don't you all try to work with the people, for us to

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like you, okay? My husband's cousin worked for the Corps of Engineers, okay. So, I know what goes on with them. All right. And, another thing, who's going to pay the people to evacuate when they don't have the money to evacuate all the time, when it's time to close these wonderful-looking flood gates? Answer that. Who's going to pay the people who cannot afford to evacuate all the time? Because you know how often storms come. Rita came, Katrina came, all of them came. A lot of them people couldn't evacuate, that's why they all had to go to the Superdome. Okay. So, who's going to pay, who's going to pay all the people here to evacuate when they cannot evacuate? You all? Congress? Yeah, when you decide to close these gates. Okay. And another thing, where is this flood gate? Once the water gets in this flood gate, when you close it, because you don't have the levees done, which is stupid, instead of doing the levees first and then the flood gate, how are you going to get the water out of here? That's another question. Okay.

Opening speaker: Okay. Let's answer that one and then we'll maybe get to somebody else.

Gene Guerrero: Answer that and then I have one quick comment.

Female engineer: The question is, once we close the gate, any water that's accumulated behind it, how will it get out? We will, the existing drainage, you know, the local drainage system, will continue to work, and that pump station that Ted mentioned, that will be part of our system. We will provide an additional pump to pump it over the gate. So, the existing conditions will be maintained.

Opening speaker: Hold on. We can't answer the question if you can't hear us, please.

Gene Guerrero: I just want to say. You all have met and we have not stopped here. May 4th, you all think is the last time, it's not.

Opening speaker: Got it. Okay.

Gene Guerrero: Because, let me tell you, wait, everybody, is everybody here with me? Yeah. If they keep this going, we can file a class action lawsuit or file an injunction, okay, to slow them down, all right, or stop them. Because, hey, it can be stopped, let me just tell you that. So, is everybody behind me with that?

Meeting attendees: Yeah! [Applause.]

Opening speaker: Thank you.

Gene Guerrero: If you think it's a done deal, it's not a done deal, so you better study some more and do something else. Go down there to Conoco Phillips and connect there, talk to these oyster fisherman and all that because they know much more than you Corps of Engineers, you all don't have any common sense.

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[Multiple background speakers]

Opening speaker: Okay. Could we kind of focus on some of the things that we can use, the technical things?

Denise Beuford: First off, let me start by saying my name is Denis Buford, I am new to the Parish. What our, I know its coming across to you as anger, tonight, it's really not, it is fear. When I say I'm new to the Parish, I own commercial property on Walker Road, I'm very familiar with what you're doing on Walker Road. I was not aware, though, of the flood wall that was coming across, and I have to say tonight that I feel unfortunate that my husband and I just purchased a prime prestige piece of property just two miles down the road, and everybody if you don't know me, I own the Blanda [Phonetic] property now, and not to throw numbers but I might have two millions dollars worth of property that we just purchased in this Parish in the last year and a half. And, to think that this investment could be hampered by a flood wall, and when I say that its because, what we're here tonight to ask you is that we understand that you have two projects going on. We just wish that the two projects would be working together. We want protection, we're glad you're here to give us protection, we need it, we know that but what we want is, instead of the flood wall to cross over at the highway, for the flood wall to tie-into the back levee. And, I hate to feel that we can't do it because the timing was wrong. If its taken this long to get to this point, can't it take a little bit longer to tie them both in? That's all we're asking for. What we're afraid of, is not only flooding from the back which I think that will be solved when you raise that back levee, what we're afraid of is when you put the flood wall, though, across that it's going to detur people. I don't know if I would have spent that kind of money on a property a mile past that flood wall. I really don't. And, that's what I'm afraid of, is what is the property value going to be after this flood wall comes?

The other thing is, I don't need flood insurance. I think it's most probably ludicrous, I couldn't believe that I didn't need flood insurance, of course, I purchased it for \$300.00. Okay. But, what happens, it will eventually, eventually, once your flood wall goes across, once the back wall gets raised, FEMA will come out with another map, we know that's going to happen. When it's going to be, no one knows. But, what's going to happen, do we now need flood insurance? And, what is the cost of that? And, that's what everybody is afraid of now. Insurance is steady rising like everything else and for us to be hit in three or four years with now needing flood insurance and what that cost is going to be, and I want to leave here tonight feeling like the books are not going to be closed on us on Monday. We all just educated on this, maybe its our fault for not being more involved with the community, and I think everyone is going to leave here, from here on out, being much more involved. I just want to ask that you give us a little more time to have our concerns met and maybe for you all to have more time to do some more study. And, I think that everybody would

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feel more comfortable if we didn't think that Monday was it, it was over with, the decision was being made. And, the only other comment I have before I leave is that we have been told by the Parish that the Parish President was going to have the authority to open and close those gates, and tonight, we were just now told, because I'm the one who asked that gentleman to ask that question because I was too embarrassed to stand and talk in front of you all tonight, and you said that, he said that he was going to have the authority, and now it's the Corps with the state with also local, and that's scared us, too.

Male engineer: Well, let me explain it. What you said is true, the Parish does have the authority unless the state changes that. Currently, every Parish that has flood gates or any type of flood control structure in their system, within that Parish, has responsibility to close and open it. So, there's a lot of coordination that happens with the state. What Julie was saying is the state is what we call our non-federal sponsor, so for all the work that is going on through the greater New Orleans area, they're the non-federal sponsor, CPRA, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority in Baton Rouge, they're a non-federal sponsor for this project. So, we build it, then we turn it over to the state who has an agreement with Plaquemines Parish; Plaquemines Parish has responsibility for the operations and maintenance of the flood gates and will operate those in any events and to provide routine maintenance on them or anything like that, if there is a decision made to build them.

Denise Beuford: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

Male engineer: Thank you.

[Applause]

Rose Jackson: Good evening to you all. My name is Rose Jackson, I am the organizer and the Vice President of the Oakville Community Action Group. I'm so happy to see so many of you here tonight in our position of the flood gates but as far as these meetings are concerned, they have been going on since 2006, 2007. How I found out about the meeting, how I found out about the meetings, I read in the Times Picayune, and the attorney that represents the Oakville Community Action Group called me because she saw it in the Times Picayune. The meetings were being held all over New Orleans, Jefferson Parish, how I found out about the first meeting, it was at Holy Cross College, and I know that it was pertaining to Oakville, so I went to the first meeting. From that first meeting I went to the second meeting, from that second meeting, I went to the third meeting. I have been attending meetings since they first started. Well, it was in the paper, it was published notice to everyone, in the paper. I read it in the Sunday paper.

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Rose Jackson: This is the important meeting, here, the first meeting that was held in Plaquemines Parish.

[Multiple background speakers]

Rose Jackson: The first meeting that was held in Plaquemines Parish was held on Belle Chasse Auditorium, your local government officials, which I don't trust no farther than I can throw them, should have notified everybody in this Parish that, that meeting was taking place.

[Applause]

Rose Jackson: So, you can't blame the Corps of Engineers for the fault of your elected officials. Remember this, we go in those booths, we put these people in office and we need to look twice before we start punching those buttons. As far as congress is concerned, you put those people up there in Washington, we put them there. They work for us. We don't work for them, they work for us. We are tax payers. We can't blame these people. Congress passes everything on to them. I work for civil service, I work for the federal government for 27 years, and whatever congress says, it goes, and if it don't go the way congress want it, trust me, not enough proficient funds to pay your salary, you're out the door and you're gone. That's the way the systems works. They're our voice but they work for congress, and congress, your elected officials, is the one that everyone in you in here tonight need to get on your computers and email your congressman and your representatives, and let them know that enough is enough! And, if you don't do that, there's not sense in beating up on the Corps of Engineers because they are paid employees of the congress, of the government. We are the government, the people, the body is the government, we vote to put them in office. We pay their salary, so, yeah, its mistakes that we made, its mistakes that we made but we make a lot of mistakes, too, by putting the wrong people in office.

[Applause]

Rose Jackson: Because the wrong decision was made for Oakville from Katrina. The local government officials gave the call and told the Corps of Engineers to put everybody debris out of Plaquemines Parish, Jefferson Parish, Orleans Parish, in Oakville. I'm living next door to a 40-foot mound of trash, garbage. You all's old deep freezers, sofa, your refrigerators, your washing machines, your air conditioners, your contaminated carbon is all here. Our local government officials was behind all of this because that decision should not have been made. So, I don't trust our local government officials. Trust me, I don't trust the one that's up there in Baton Rouge. I worked up there with them five and six times a year, I've been to Washington, D.C. back in 1996 at, that went into affect, I worked for Teddy Johnson, I know how it came about. That's why I organized

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Oakville Community Action Group because there's too many wrong things that's going on. We can't just blame these people. Let me tell you something...

Opening speaker: Okay. Let's just let her finish and then we can...

Rose Jackson: You all are talking about the flood gate. Guess what, that levee was coming through the middle of Oakville. And, I fought tooth and nail, it was better to move that dirt than to move those families.

Opening speaker: Okay. Thank you, ma'am.

Rose Jackson: It was going to affect those families. The flood gate, that's nothing, the last meeting that was held here they said they were going to put a wretched old building and divide this community. They was going to put a highway, elevate the highway so that when the school buses come out for the children, they had to go almost around the trailer park to make a u-turn to get these kids on the highway.

Opening speaker: Okay, well, let's...

Rose Jackson: You blame your local government officials because they're suppose to notify the people, let the people know what's going on and they're not doing it.

[Applause]

Opening speaker: Let me just address the issue of notification. Make sure you signed up and after the meeting come and tell me some ways that we can improve communicating with you. What we do now, is we send out postcards, we tape flyers to various shops and stores, grocery stores around town, in some cases we even had people that go door-to-door. If we're missing you, I want to know how I can ensure that we get the word to you. So, come up, if you've got ideas on that, I'll show you how to email them, you can come and talk to me after the meeting because we absolutely want to make sure that everybody knows about these meetings well in advance. So, thank you.

Anthony Buras: Thank you. My name is Anthony Buras, and I'm one of the local government officials that these people have frustration with. I'm their local councilmen and I have not done a very good job of notifying them, that will change.

[Applause]

Anthony Buras: But, I want to tell you, I want to ask one specific question, and the gentleman in the back hit on it just now. I've been to Washington five times since I took office in 2007, to talk with the Corps and with our members of congress, and I'll be honest with you ladies and gentlemen, the federal government is like a dog

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chasing its tale because on the one hand, the Corps of Engineers says, congress has to authorize it, but when I go to congress and talk to congress, they tell me the Corps didn't tell us we need to authorize it. And, it's my understanding from people who live in my district that **[Inaudible 01:57:24]**, that tell me congress authorizes these projects based on information that they get from the Corps. Well, I'll let you respond to that but I would like to add one more comment before I leave, and this is going to make some of you guys up here mad, and I hope the ranking officers in the Corps will take this to heart. But, there are two people from the Corps standing up here, tonight, who I have attempted to call, left voicemails at your offices, my secretary got in touch with one of you gentleman last week, on Monday actually, and you told her, had the gall to tell my secretary, yes, I understand your boss is looking for me, I haven't had the time to call him back. But, I've called for two of you, left voicemails on your voicemail at your office with my name, my concern, and the question that I have and you all have not called me back. I think that's appalling, and I think that policy needs to change. Thank you.

Opening speaker:

If after the meeting, you tell me who those people were, I'll make sure that we address that. Let me give you a quick civics thing about how a project gets to the authorization and the construction. The first thing that happens is the community identifies a problem they want to fix. And, then they go to the local government that can go to the state government and they go to your members of congress. And, at congress then decides, okay, we need to look into this and if its appropriate, they'll turn to the Corps and say, go out and do what's called a reconnaissance study, and the Corps goes in and looks at what the issues and if there is an issue and it can be solved, part of that process is meeting with elected officials in the community, the individuals, and civic groups. And, then it moves to, you know, steps through government, feasibility, and the various other things. It's got to start at the local level. Now, if somebody calls up the Corps and says, hey, we think we have a problem here, we absolutely are going to sit down and talk to you about it and help you work through that process. So, that's this process that congress has established that works.

Male speaker:

I recommend that they take more than one mile trip south for the reconnaissance trips. And, I say that facetiously but that's the situation that we're in right now. Two days ago, we met with the Parish President and we talked about both of these projects together but what he told us was, this is not going to be a bad thing. The protection levee goes across here and then you have your federalized levee that's well up to 14-feet here, you are going to be more safe, you're going to be safer after that project than you are if you took 16-feet all the way down. Now, I want to know if that is a true statement or not a true statement. I would say, what we want is either tie-in here to a non-federal levee, federalize it and make a 16-foot levee down behind us to protect all of us instead of dividing the Parish. If we go 16-feet and then we federalize it 12 to 14, will we be safer or not safer on this side of the levee?

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Female engineer: I'm not sure I'm understanding the question but the answer is, is once we complete the project, will you be safer? Absolutely. The levees are going to be raised, the levees I'm hearing our approximate elevation five to seven.

Male speaker: I will say that if that is true, that we will be safer on this side of the levee, then let's go to the other alternative that brings it across Hero Canal and when we **[Unintelligible 02:47]** Oakville on the safer side of that levee, and save 30 million or whatever it costs to include Oakville.

Female engineer: I'm sorry, you're going to have to repeat the question. I didn't follow.

Male speaker: Are we safer with a 16-foot wall protecting Belle Chasse and a 12 to 14-foot non-federal levee going behind **[Unintelligible 02:01]** or are we safer tying into the existing non-federal levee, making it federal and building the project, tying the two projects together; wouldn't it be better if I am inside that 100-year protection?

Female engineer: Both projects being built, is that your question?

Male speaker: I want both...

Female engineer: Both projects are being built, I'm doing the best I can.

[Multiple background speakers]

Male speaker: We have heard that these projects come from congress. If we can successfully, as one voice, lobby congress, and get them to tie IEO 13 with the other existing non-federal levee build up into one project. Get a timeline that fast tracks, so we can get it prior to 2014 or whenever we can get it, wouldn't we be better off with 100-year protection down south of Alliance, than a 16-foot, 100-year and a 12 to 14-foot levee behind us?

Female engineer: If you get more protection, yes, you would be safer. If you're success to get more authority, yes, you would be more safe.

Male speaker: I would say that the reason that came down south of Oakville is because of the executive order 12-8-98 that talks about taking care of some of your poorer neighborhoods. That is, by law, and you did that, you complied with that in our IER, you complied with executive order 12-8-98. There are similar settlements like that south of here that will be negatively affected, and you will violate 12-8-98 because you haven't done a benefit to cost ratio in your IER. Because, I did not see a BCR in the, it's been waived. Again, these are problems when you're trying to affect this many people outside of this, when you're not doing an EIS and you're waiving a BCR, in all of this, I can say.

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- Female engineer: Let me just give a little, help this out. When this was authorized in 1996, an environmental assessment, it may have been an EIS, or an environmental assessment, was done that did compliance with the environmental justice executive orders as well as all the NEPA. That document is available for public review but an EA was done prior to this being authorized. And, there will be an EIS for the future project south.
- Male speaker: I will tell you that NEPA is to protect us, and when we waive that away, and we are not doing an assessment, a full up assessment, and we are fast tracking something, then that is the first call that I make to Charles Melacon gave up here and to Larry Landrip, they are all getting those letters now and they're only getting notified now because we are only being notified now.
- Female engineer: Right. Let me just add this, when we did, there was a chief report done in 1994 which documented the alternatives that were looked at for everything east of Algiers, and an EIS accompanied that. Okay. During that process, a benefit to cost ratio was done, it was not waived then. What was waived is, when congress appropriated money to finish building the system, they didn't require us to go back and re-look at the benefit to cost ratio.
- Male speaker: That is because of faulty information and no recon drive that showed what the economic impact because we waived the regional economic development plan and we waived the national economic development plan and we did not take into account this new evaluation and the new income produced by these people that are out here. You know, we do not want to stop the gate, we want to change the project so that's tied into federalizing and bringing it up to 100-year levee for everybody. Not for some and excluding others.
- Female engineer: Right. But, you know, what we do here does not change what has already been authorized. That additional authority can, you know, be sought and what's good for the community south of Oakville is congress did not require a benefit to cost ratio to be calculated before they gave us the authority to raise that non-federal levee.
- Male speaker: That cannot be good because if they did the benefit to cost ratio and annualized it, they would see that when you increase our risk by not giving us 100-year protection, then you are hurting the community.
- Female engineer: Right. I would just suggest that you could work with local and state officials to ask them to look at increasing that level of protection.
- Male speaker: Again, just before I give up the mic, there is proper notification, we can give you suggestions that we all agree that this is bad but a phone call was made in February, by my wife, because she heard a rumor, some hearsay, that this project was in play. She called the Corps, I can give you the names after, and were told

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no. But, that project is not in play, and if that happened we know how badly we would affect you if that did happen, and we would certainly need to compensate you by buying your loss, and I say that is completely wrong, but we put it to bed because we figured that the greater good would prevail and eventually, whenever we get the funding for this, that you know, and so we understand the civics, when you all go back, it is Colonel Lee that signs the decision document, and that goes back to Washington, but that goes back to General Vann [Phonetic] at the Corps of Engineers. Am I right? It does not go back to congress, per say, it goes back to the chain of command within the Corps of Engineers. So, when we talked about going to Washington, we are not talking about, these people are, like she said before, employees, and they are employees of our representatives and when they say authorization, it is up to us to change the authorization with congress, and that can be done by holding off, doing a full EIS, while we notify our congressmen, they debate it, they figure out how to, instead of bailing out my credit card company, they bail out this project here and they fund it.

[Applause]

Male engineer: Thank you for your comments and we will take into account the comments here tonight and determine whether or not we will extend the comment period. So, that's part of the decision making that we'll do after this public meeting.

Opening speaker: Yes, ma'am.

Linda Thyme: My name is Linda Thyme [Phonetic], and I'm a resident of Jesuit Bend. I was previously a resident of Empire, Louisiana which I still have a home there that's worth at least \$200,000.00 that survived Katrina. So, there are homes down there, not just shacks, and you know what, even if you live in a shack, it's your home. That is your home, that's where you live, and you deserve to be protected just like the person that's in New Orleans, just like the bankers who sacrifice my grandmother in the 1800's, and it seems like that's what you're doing right now. You're going to sacrifice everybody past Oakville for the benefit of everybody north. That is unconstitutional, it seems like, I mean, it's just wrong.

Number two, you said, for the concerned people, if you have a concern, you should be here tonight and voice your concern. Well, my brother is in Riverbend Nursing Home, he is crippled and blind, and there's almost 200 other residence who can't be here tonight. You are sacrificing these residence homes. They're not cattle, they're not pasture land, they're people who's paid taxes to live here. How dare you sacrifice their home.

[Applause]

Curtis Carroll: Yes, my name is Curtis Carroll, I've been a resident since 1995. This is a good meeting because I just met the new neighbor through the meeting, and I'd like to

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say, we're thankful that you called the meeting that you have been gracious. As I was sitting there and I was wondering, the neighbor down a little further from me, asked a question that you didn't answer. She asked, was there a notification in '96? Was there a notification in '96? Wait a minute, in 1986 you came up with the right, then you made an amendment, right, it was amended in 1996. Right?

Female engineer: That's correct. Right. And, the NEPA process was followed in '96. Public involvement, yes. And, those documents, you know, are still available for review.

Curtis Carroll: So, you're saying there was.

Female engineer: Yes, sir.

Curtis Carroll: But, we just missed that memo. Right? That's not a problem. Okay. I just wanted to know, that's protocol for you to send out in a public meeting and we just missed it. Okay. That's not a problem. I noticed that there were alternatives on the table over here, and I don't want to waste anybody's time but if, is there any alternative that will produce this gate passed the residential areas, the heavily populated residential areas that's on the table now?

Female engineer: The alternatives that we looked at for the Eastern Tie-In, this is the southernmost alternative that was evaluated.

Curtis Carroll: Okay. Is there, Colonel, you've heard a lot of different, there was a lot of great comments brought up today. You said it lies in your hand. What, if any, suggestion, comment, thought, would make it possible, to move this to an area that is less populated? Is there any?

Female engineer: Is the question...

Curtis Carroll: No, I'm talking to the Colonel.

Male engineer: This is the process, and this, I mean, we're listening to your concerns, we'll go back and evaluate your concerns and determine which recommendation is the right way to go. I mean, that's what this is all about.

Curtis Carroll: Right. So, I'm asking you, I mean, you're saying its not a done deal, right? Let me stop right here, the FEMA gentleman with insurance, he made a comment that this is going to help us. I don't know of a Jesuit, everybody here is from Jesuit Bend, majority because Oakville is protected. Everybody in the community of Oakville is protected by that gate. It's the people in Jesuit Bend that's going to be affected and further down, the rest of the Parish. But, I head the guy from FEMA say that its going to be better for us.

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Male engineer: Well, let me explain that. I said I couldn't tell right now but, well, I can't, the project's not done. No, you cannot do modeling until a project is done. But when you're looking at what is happening here, you're looking at the court telling you that they're going to give you one percent protection. When that one percent protection is given to you, then your flood insurance rates will drop.

Curtis Carroll: When the gate drops and water is on the back side.

Male engineer: No because right now, nothing will change with your elevations outside that levee protection system. Nothing is going to change there, so there's, I can't really say that your flood insurance will go down or go up because nothing is going to change but your elevation. Just as she mention, the risk...

Opening speaker: You can't the answer, would you please.

Curtis Carroll: That's fine but the water came over the levee for Katrina, right? My insurance is now, what, 40% higher but there was no elevation change but my insurance is higher. Right? You're talking my elevation, I'm talking about...

Male engineer: Your flood insurance from the federal government has not changed.

Curtis Carroll: ... okay, well, the insurance company...

Male engineer: Your flood insurance for your homeowners, I have no control of.

Curtis Carroll: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. My flood insurance went up.

Male engineer: Your flood insurance should not have gone up. If your flood insurance has gone up, give your address and I'll check into it.

Curtis Carroll: 12203 Highway 23. One more, another question.

Male engineer: But, I will check into it because your flood insurance has not gone up. Congress sets flood insurance rates and there have not been any changes.

Curtis Carroll: We pay our house note on the escrow, right? Well, we do.

Male engineer: Your flood zones have not changed for Plaquemines Parish.

Curtis Carroll: Wait, I'm just going to tell you something. I talked to the lady at the bank yesterday, she told me that, hey, you got to pay the shortage on your escrow because your flood insurance went up. She told me that.

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- Curtis Carroll: Okay, that's fine. The storm surges, we're talking about a storm surge, correct? The gate is being put there for a storm surge? Can anybody? It's a storm surge, correct? Somebody, please, right, but...
- Female engineer: Right, this is to prevent the storm surge from moving further north. If it's already come over the existing levee or, in the future, if it comes over the levee that's been [Inaudible multiple speakers.]
- Curtis Carroll: Okay. Hypothetically...
- Opening speaker: Can we hold it down just a little, please, so we can hear his question.
- Curtis Carroll: Hypothetically speaking, right, the storm surge we're talking about is coming from, are we talking about a storm coming through Barataria Bay or are coming this way? Which way are we talking about the storm coming? Worst case scenario, to where the whole west bank is going to flood anyway? Is that what you're saying? Or, when it comes through the Barataria Bay?
- Female engineer: What she is referring to is the storm surge that has the potential of overtopping this levee and coming this way.
- Curtis Carroll: Right, Barataria Bay which has the potential to inundate the whole west bank anyway.
- Female engineer: From here down, yes.
- Curtis Carroll: No, no, no, no, no, no.
- Female engineer: There are some events, yes.
- Curtis Carroll: What kind of storm surge are we talking about? Cat 1, cat 2, cat 3, what are we talking about? What are we talking about?
- Female engineer: Just to make sure you understand, categories and storm surges are not equal, so don't try to equal storm surges and categories.
- Curtis Carroll: Wave height, can we do wave height?
- Female engineer: What we're talking about is this...
- Opening speaker: Hold it down a little bit so we can hear. Thank you. The question was, how much storm surge, where it's going to come from.
- Curtis Carroll: It is already predicted or it is already calculated and the Corps already knows, right, with a cat 1, it's not etched in stone but there is a forecasted storm surge with a cat 1.

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[Multiple speakers at once]

Curtis Carroll: So, you're trying to tell me that when they make their predictions on a cat 3, they said that when Katrina hit, Katrina had a cat 4 storm surge. So, they needed to throw cat 4 out because they didn't know, you're telling me they don't know.

Female engineer: Let me just offer this, a hurricane category, cat 1, cat 2, is determined primarily or maybe exclusively by wind speed. When we predict storm surge it's based on a lot of perimeters. The size of the hurricane, the intensity of the hurricane, the projected path of the hurricane, the wind speed because wind speed does drive waves. So, it's much more complicated how we determine what the predicted surge will be than to equate it to a category 1, 2, 3.

Curtis Carroll: And, that's why I asked you which way the storm was coming because you do project on the geographic. You do, so what I'm asking you is this here, so when you say that there's going to be a wall right here and it's going to protect Belle Chasse, northern Belle Chasse, and the west bank because we're outside of that, so we're just left to fend for ourselves. Right? So, but you say that you don't know what tidal surge, you can't give me how high that's going to be. And, just one more question, okay go ahead.

Female engineer: Okay. The 10 ½ - foot levee along the Hero to Oakville reach is designed based on a storm surge that has a one percent of occurrence each year. That number is about, and don't quote me exactly, it's about seven to seven and a half feet of surge.

Curtis Carroll: Okay. So, it's going to top the levee, so a surge 15-foot is going to inundate everybody, it don't matter anyway. Right? But, I know you've already said, what's going to happen when you close the gate, what's going to happen to us? Are we going to have some pumping stations put down there or something that's going to help? What is the contingency plan for us?

Female engineer: All right. The question I have to ask you is, are you in here or are you down here? You're down in Jesuit Bend.

Curtis Carroll: I'm one mile down, about one mile down, if that. But, what I'm saying is this here. So, what is...

[Multiple speakers at once]

Curtis Carroll: Okay. So, is there anything on the table for us. Even if the gates pass, if you decide, you know your conscious tells you that, hey, let's go ahead on, and we're going to put the gate here and we're going to do this to protect up here. If you do put that gate there, are you going to do anything for the people on the southern side of that gate?

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Female engineer: Yes.

Curtis Carroll: What are you going to do?

Female engineer: That's Bill Malase's project and that's the project that the house has underway right now.

Curtis Carroll: That don't have nothing to do with this gate. Right? Okay. All right.

Opening speaker: Could I get your name, sir, just so we get the comments with it.

Kenny Stuart: My name is Kenny Stuart, I live in Jesuit Bend. I also happen to own the landfill. I guess I'll start off with the propose alignment. I disagree with the proposed alignment and I think what a lot of the people are saying here tonight is the alignment, the way it is laid out, if you simply just came straight across and tied-in, which I understand there'd be rocks you have to go through, but if you didn't have all this big jig-jag coming back to the highway and didn't have to put the gate in, if you're able to save 50 to 60 to 80 million dollars on a project, is it possible to divert that money that is allocated for that to go ahead and give the protection behind Jesuit Bend? That money could be spent simultaneously, I think, is what some of the frustration is, and you wouldn't need to even put the gate in.

[Applause]

Kenny Stuart: I know its not as easy as I'm trying to describe it but all I'm saying is, and I'll go through with what I'm trying to say is, if you came straight across and tied-in to what you call existing non-fed levee, and you're going to all ready, well, not there. Yeah, you go straight across and stop all this zigzagging because the Corps gives specifically the environmental portion of it, the foot print that you use for the levee is not being impacted any different. You have direct and indirect wet lands, okay, and what they're talking about, people, is if you put that, the width of that levee is what is being, is what's impacting the wet lands. It's how many feet it takes to build the levee. Okay. So, you're not impacted if you're shortening that up, you're not impacting more wet lands. What they're not wanting to do with this design is have more indirect impact on wet land. That's what it all boils down to. Is that not correct? Wait a minute, is that not correct? That is the law. It is indirect impact. That is not direct impact.

Female engineer: But, let me just add this, okay. Part of the process is we are required to avoid, minimize and compensate, litigate for environmental impacts. We're also, the process is how we affect the human environment.

Kenny Stuart: Okay. Let me stop you right there. But, the foot print, what you're actually impacting, the foot print that the levee is built on, is no different. That is impact

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because you're building a levee on that property, you're impacting the wet lands. What we're saying is, the law is not exactly on indirect impact. If you're not impacting the wet lands, just because there's a levee in front of it and it still flows and everything. You're not impacting it. That's your interpretation. Okay. And, look.

Female engineer: Let me just add this to is, and I hope this helps. Okay. One of the reasons why we're not proposing alignment that just comes straight across and stops here is because it is our responsibility to close this system, you know, for us to comply with congress's intent, not authorization, we have to provide a system that can be certified so that flood insurance, you know, so that the residence in that community can participate in the national flood insurance program. I recognize that a lot of the residence here tonight...

[Multiple background speakers]

Female engineer: I get that. I'm just asking you to understand. We're working under two separate authorities. So, we can't re-nig on our responsibility to address our mandate here but we're doing a second thing to address and minimize risk south.

Kenny Stuart: For Julie, I guess my question for Julie is, if you can prove an economic savings, there's no way, I guess, to change it. Even show you're saving a significant amount of money that can be forwarded to the next project, is there no room there?

Female engineer: I would just say that there's a process by which congress can act if they want to authorize 100-year protection to the community south of Oakville.

Kenny Stuart: One more question, I'm just stating my opinion. Concerning the flood gate across the, I'm opposed to your proposed 54-foot flood gate. You have several businesses, besides mine, that are on the canal, and our opinion is that the locks are 75-foot wide in the river and we're having commercial traffic come in and out and we have barges that come in up to 100-foot wide. We're losing all of this and you're only wanting to put a 56-foot wide gate in when the locks are 75-foot wide. I think its unfair economic impact to the individuals who have the businesses and the savings of the money from a 56-foot gate to a 75-foot gate, I don't know the exact economics, but its not that much. And, you know, I've been able to supply my letters of objection and I appreciate that time but I just want to go on the record tonight that I'm against the 56-foot gate and I'm against the current alignment. Thank you very much for your time.

Opening speaker: Thanks.

[Applause]

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Female speaker: How many times do you have to flood before you're not longer eligible for FEMA assistance or the flood program?

Male engineer: There's no amount.

Female speaker: No amount.

[Multiple background speakers]

Male engineer: That's not what she asked. She asked...

[Multiple background speakers]

Opening speaker: Come on, let's let him answer the question.

Male engineer: ... she asked about federal assistance. Okay. That was the question, the question was about federal assistance. Okay. What do you? She asked me about federal assistance. She didn't ask me about a non-compliant home that you would have to elevate which is a different question. Her question was about...

Female speaker: You'll be able to get flood insurance as many times as you want to pay for it after you've been flooded umpteen times?

Male engineer: That's correct.

Female speaker: How do you think your homeowners insurance is going to be affected by that?

Male engineer: Ma'am, I don't know.

Female speaker: Because, they do go together.

Male engineer: Your flood insurance does have an ICC benefit.

Male speaker: How much? What's the limit?

Male engineer: Thirty-thousand.

Male speaker: Thirty-thousand. Now, I've got a freaking 3,000 square foot house, they going to jack this thing up in the air?

Opening speaker: Let's just...

Male engineer: You do have a federal programs that do have funding available.

Opening speaker: Okay. We're just going to do one questioner at a time.

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Male engineer: You don't have to get a loan, there are some federal programs for that.

Female speaker: Let me just add one more fuel to this fire in here. Most of these people have mortgages on their homes, some of them are fortunate enough to have worked all their lives and pay for it, while the rest of us are enjoying the same thing and following in their footsteps, and we contribute to the rest of the states around this country by having the stuff that we have down here with our refineries and our citrus. So, why are you all going to affect us when we're, living people here, are paying our taxes and doing what we need to do to help everyone else out? Put the gate at the waterway where the water is, not here, we're not waterfront property, yet, you're making us that.

[Applause]

Opening speaker: Okay. We've got a flood insurance question.

Male speaker: I just have a question. I went to a meeting, I guess it was a month ago, maybe not even a month ago, down at the middle schools, and Billy was going over some of these things with the maps and all this kind of stuff. And, after the meeting, he said, well, they've got a desk over there, you all can go see the FEMA reps and they'll take a satellite, Google Earth and pinpoint your address right. So, I went up there, I think it was FEMA, who does the flood maps? Okay. So, I went there and I should have brought it with me, but I went, he Goggled and he went there, and I said, well, when the new flood maps come out, I said, well, when is the new flood map? Well, when that gate's built, the new flood maps are going to come out. And, he put on, I said, well what zone, he says, you're right now, currently, in a A, I believe, you're going to be in a A-E zone. And, I said, well, what does that mean? He said, well you're grandfathered in, son, he said, you have nothing to worry about, as long as you keep your insurance, you can pass that on. I said, well that's good, that's good. So, I said, well, what happens to my neighbor, he's got an empty lot next door to me, and he they want to build a house, what is my flood elevation going to be? It's going to go to 10 feet. So, if this flood gate is so good for us, they going to change this FEMA map, so my neighbor can go, and if I wanted to go 10 feet high, we'd gone to Myrtle Grove or Venice or wherever, this is the last place we can go here. Do you realize when this is gone, the rest of this Parish, that property value has gone to mill, okay. My property, I can have a million dollar house but if somebody is going to give me \$100,000.00, that's what it's worth. Okay. Now, everything north of this, their property has gone up exponentially or whatever, however the word is, I'm sorry if I'm messing up, but you all know what I'm saying. So, that's going to go up through the roof. So, when we all flood and we get our little 250,000, my house is worth more than 250,000, that's another thing, you all need to go up on your insurance, that's crazy. They don't have a regular house for 250,000 anymore. Okay. So, right now, when I get flooded, I'm going to have to go to, if I want to stay in this Parish, and I don't

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know if I do anymore, I love this Parish. I moved here, my wife wanted me to get out of here before because of all this stuff, and I said, no, I love it here. I love my big backyard. I like my neighbors. Okay. So, now, and I love my fishing, I got in my boat and I go right down the road and I'm out there fishing, man. Come back home, my kids are all over me, what'd you catch, what'd you catch? Okay. So, that's another story. [Laughter.] Anyway, you are going to make us give up our home equity that we sweat for, that we pay for everyday, and I apologize for everybody here, obviously, we're not intelligence enough to read the paper and see because all these people here, right now, didn't see this notice. So, obviously, you know, and they got people here that can read and write and do whatever, and obviously, we didn't see it. And, we apologize for that, Colonel. I do.

Opening speaker: I think Bill might be able to address that with the lower Plaquemines non-federal levee project, and the kind of protection that will give you.

Male speaker: Okay. But, if you're going to change that A-E zone, will that change the zones?

Male engineer: I have no idea. I don't know about the flood insurance.

Male speaker: That's all I have.

Male engineer: Let me tell you about you're A-E zone. Sir, it doesn't, it's just a change for FEMA new maps. You're A, your flood elevation is not going up right now. All right. It doesn't, we don't know what, we don't know how it will go as of yet. Okay. Right now, when you're looking at your current A-zone.

[Multiple speakers at once]

Male speaker: Why did your employee or whoever that you're, why would he write on there, and he put on the FEMA map, I should've brought it, I could show it to you, your new flood elevation is going to be 10 feet. He wrote that, where'd he come up with that?

Male engineer: That's a preliminary proposed map right now. Okay. Well, that's one thing but one thing you need to look at is currently you look at what the Corps is presenting, you need to look at the projects that Billy has working with congress. After that is done, I know it was mentioned earlier, a lady mentioned it, is that these maps will be re-done. So, that 10 feet may drop to five feet, we don't know but it just depends on what those elevations come out to be after the work is complete.

Male speaker: So, if we're in such a good shape, like she says we're going to be, why is my flood elevation going to go up?

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Male engineer: It may not. Right now...

Male speaker: So, you should say, when they build this wall that my flood elevation, when somebody new comes in and buys a house that, that flood elevation is going to be where I'm at right now?

Male engineer: That's correct, right now. Yes, it will.

Male speaker: No, not right now, not right now, sir, when that gate it built.

Male engineer: No. Let me tell you. Let me, no. Plaquemines Parish had the option to use those new maps. What they did at their last council meeting is they chose not to use those maps. They're used, not it's not, they're using the current ABFE maps and they're using the old maps from 1984, I believe. Okay. That's what they're currently using. So, you don't have a 10 foot elevation right now. Well, that's your Parish government that's choosing that, not FEMA.

Male speaker: Excuse me. I have to intervene, I have to make this comment, please. Please, excuse me. The last two gentlemen, you will be the last for this evening. I know that there's something that needs to be done that you would like to do. I think the Corps has approved that you would like for you to do your thing. All right. I would like to point out that it's going on nine o'clock, and there's good news by the way, because we can all come back Monday at the Belle Chasse Auditorium at 6:00. No, that's still a comment period.

[Faint background speaker]

Male speaker: That's correct. I mean, line's bled down, there's two people. Okay. I'm going home.

Jesse Meerscheidt: All right. My name is Jesse Meerscheidt. All right. As compared to most of the individuals that are here today, I am transient to this area. I'm military. I understand and I appreciate the responsibility and the purpose of the Corps of Engineers, both civilian and Military. The issue that I have is the documentation. Okay. My notification on this issue arrived just a couple days ago via a flyer set out by the action group in my mailbox. That's how I was notified. I'll be it, yes, I did arrive this last summer but that's how I was notified. Now, I am here representing the homeowner which is also Military. She's currently stationed in South Carolina. So, I am representing her. She is also going to be impacted by this situation. Her home was built after the '96 act and the '86 stuff. Okay. What my question is, first off for that portion is, what about the timeliness of the information? I understand that the wheels of government turn slowly, especially in the Military side, I can understand that issue. Okay. But, the problem is when you're having that kind of impact upon the public, the information has to be more timely. That is something that needs to be brought up from within the agency

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that's conducting the work. I can't go build a new range with information from 1904. That's basically the situation that you're facing right now, is your information is completely outdated, and that is strictly from my outsider's perspective but it is severely outdated.

I was also asked to ask the question about the pumps. Apparently, on the last hurricane, of which, last storm, sorry, there were problems with those pumps working. Now, I understand, as with the flood gates, those will probably be passed down to the Parish to be maintaining and operating but if that's the case, and these new pumps are placed both within the levee, this new levee zone and the outside area, if there's going to be new pumps installed, how are we going to be able to insure that those pumps are maintained? I understand that's a council, Parish issue, what about better pumps? What about a better pumping facility? Anything to that affect.

Female engineer: Okay. This project, the Eastern Tie-In project is only going to add one additional pump, and the reason that pump is being added is because local drainage is handled by the local drainage district. The Corps has no role in the operation of a local drainage district. Okay. But, the construction of our project is going to intercept or block the flow of some of that drainage. So, we don't want to induce that flooding or trap it, so we're going to add a pump to move it over the system so it can flow south as it did before we built the wall. So, all the other pump stations are local pump stations.

Jesse Meerscheidt: Okay. That'll move it into the unleveed area?

Female engineer: The same place it's discharging to at this time.

Jesse Meerscheidt: Okay. All right. Personally, I agree with the enclosure of the landfill for this wall. If that sucker gets hit by a surge, then all of that nasty stuff is going to get everywhere and everybody's business. So, that makes a lot of sense to me, as far as I'm concerned but the issue is, is that there are so many homes, people, who have established south of here, people buy homes as a legacy, to pass down to their children, and this is being endangered badly. And, the perception is that it is not being addressed in a quantifiable way. The information that you all are stressing, you keep saying the '96 act, the '96 information, all these studies and what not, but they're archaic because the home that I'm living in that I'm renting from the GM1, I am GM1. I took her job. Her home was built after Katrina. So, she's going to be losing out on that situation right there. A lot of people are on that same boat. So, why is there not a update or projection of population growth? I didn't see that in the IE 13. I didn't see anything to that affect. Not saying it wasn't there, I just didn't see it. Okay.

Male engineer: It all goes back, and I know you all know some of you here, but it all goes back to the authorities, again. You know, we looked at and we updated our

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information on the alignment that we have authorized. We have a second project that we're investigating in the economics and everything will be looked at as part of that project.

Jesse Meerscheidt: Okay.

Male engineer: As Colonel Lee was about to say, it is our process, it's the federal process.

Jesse Meerscheidt: And, I understand that. But, if your authorized at one point to send your five-year-old to school and your five-year-old is now 15, you're not going to put him in the same grade level that you're authorized to put him in when he's five, and that's the situation that you're facing here. You've got hundreds of people that are down south that are not included in the initial...

Male engineer: But, that's what we're trying to tell you all tonight. Congress recognized that and that's why they authorized a second project.

Jesse Meerscheidt: Okay. Okay. So, is there going to be a potential impact between the finalization of the first project and the finalization of the second project?

Male engineer: We don't believe so.

Jesse Meerscheidt: Okay. Well, I know the insurance companies, being money makers that they are, they're going to see that new wall and they're going to go, these guys out here aren't as protected and they're going to want to...

Male engineer: This wall only comes into play if this area is flooded. That wall plays no play in any of this unless this area floods.

Opening speaker: It's getting kind of hard to hear. If we can keep it down so we can hear the questions and answer, please.

Male engineer: Only if the non-federal system or the federal system, after it's built, overtops or whatever, does this wall even come into play. It has no impact, whatsoever, it doesn't. We don't believe it does.

Jesse Meerscheidt: My house.

[Multiple background speakers]

Jesse Meerscheidt: The house that I'm living in is about 200 feet from the canal that's, **[Unintelligible 02:40:06]**, I think that is. Being that it's that close to that drainage canal with the non-federal levee that's back there, I mean, would you be interested in it? I mean, that's my concern is, yes, I'm transient, and yes, I have no stake as a property owner but I've got personal property, I've got real property, my family. That's a concern that I have. You know, I sent my family

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packing when a hurricane comes, I have to ride in a five-ton to take my gear and get out of here. In the mean time, as many other people, my livelihood and my goods stay home.

[Multiple speakers]

Opening speaker: And we are going to consider those. Those are important.

Jesse Meerscheidt: Okay. Will congress listen to you when you tell them that the information that was used to get this act in place, to authorize this situation to occur, will they listen to you when you tell them that it is outdated and it is no longer valid? I understand that you're in position where you can't...

Opening speaker: Yes, that will be in the report. We've got some people coming back and right behind you, so if you want to come back around again.

Jesse Meerscheidt: Thank you.

Opening speaker: Thanks.

Male speaker: You keep talking about authorization and what you're hearing from us is it doesn't make sense. Our Parish President told us, the other night, that this state is getting somewhere around 11 billion dollars for levees, two billion here in Plaquemines Parish but that money has to be spent or it our projects have to be finished by 2011. This, you can finish by 2011, the other thing you can't and that's why you building them. You building it because you can get it done and its authorized. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense to do it and keep going forward just because you can because it's not the right thing to do, it's not going to help them and it's not going to help us. It's not going to help anybody, just like the gentleman said before, if the Barararia Basin overflows and comes in, that ain't stopping nothing. You put a 16-foot levee from there all the way down, it might slow it down, probably won't, but it might slow it down. That is being built just to be built because you've got to spend the money by 2011 and you can't build that other levee until 2013, that's what you just told us. And, that's why you're doing it because that's authorized, you don't have to go pick on nobody to get them to approve it and you're going to go do it because you can make your deadline and you can spend the money. It's about spending the money on time. That's all I've got to say.

[Applause]

Donald Landry: My name's Donald Landry. I've got a question on, will the delay of the deadline of May 4th impact any work, any physical work that is currently being done by the Corps on this project?

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Female engineer: You know, there's ongoing work, we have to, for us to move forward to construction, we have to complete the environmental process. Our intent is to keep the...

Donald Landry: I heard you waived that.

Female engineer: No, we abbreviated it.

[Multiple speakers at once]

Female engineer: Well, that was all done to try to get protection in place as soon as possible.

Donald Landry: Right.

Female engineer: But, yes, there are certain activities that cannot begin. We cannot acquire property, we cannot start construction until we complete but we're very sensitive to waiting until the time is right, until we've received all the comments we need to receive to make that decision. So, there is an urgency to move forward, balance against, a willingness to keep the comment period open...

Donald Landry: Right.

Female engineer: ... and the decision we'll make as to where that needs to close.

Donald Landry: I guess my, being from an engineering background, I guess my question really was from a physical point. The current work the Corps is doing, will that be impacted if we get this May 4th deadline postponed?

Female engineer: The answer is, yes. Until we get to that milestone certain things can't begin or end.

Donald Landry: So, will it impact the end date?

Female engineer: Yes.

Donald Landry: So, you've got a critical path that if you don't start on May 5th, you can't complete by 2011?

Female engineer: Sir, I can tell you that, you know, the goal to finish...

Donald Landry: Answer... **[Inaudible 02:50:32 Multiple speakers.]**

Female engineer: The answer is, yes. I mean, we're got lots of tasks that have to be completed in this critical path.

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- Donald Landry: I understand that and you all got your hands filled and, believe me, everybody in this room, assure, appreciate all the work that the Corps is trying to do in a limited amount of time. Don't get us wrong, here, there's a lot of heightened personalities right now but we really appreciate you all's efforts. All we're trying to do, though, is, and this is my other question, is, how can we get these two projects tied together and alleviate this final flood gate across the highway? Because that's the real concern, here, that's what I've heard, mostly, is this flood gate, it's not the project, it's not the increase in the levee heights or anything else, it's this flood gate. Our fear is once you put this flood gate across the road, congress being congress being politicians being looking for votes, we may never get funded, okay, because, what's that? We're funding to federalize the levees all the way to Alliance? Federalize?
- Female engineer: Yes. Yes.
- Donald Landry: Okay. So, that's been approved?
- Female engineer: Yes.
- Donald Landry: Is the money approved, to fund that?
- Female engineer: Yes. No, the property to construct this project or the non-federal levee has not taken place, yet, and that cannot take place until environmental processes are...
- Donald Landry: Can somebody stop it is what you're saying. In other words, this man said, it's approved, it's a done deal, we're going to get federal levees down to Alliance, is that what you just said?
- Female engineer: What is said is the project, the Bill Malase project we talked about, you know, they're still looking at alternatives but money has been appropriated. Bill, correct me, over 600 million dollars? Six hundred and seventy something million dollars has been funded to expend on raising those non-federal levees and in putting them into the federal system. That's done. Where we're at is choosing the right alignment to move forward into construction but the funding is there.
- Donald Landry: Okay. It was... Okay. I can do that.
- Opening speaker: If you could let somebody else ask a question or make a comment. Okay.
- Male engineer: One second, I would like to address the environmental question. We are working on an alternative arrangement which is very new, it's actually the, it was the very first time the Corps of Engineers every got one in place or actually ever asked for one. We, in no way, are shortcutting the environmental compliant process. It is full and complete. What we were allowed to do; go back to the big map, the big one, this one; under normal process, we would've done an EIS from this point to

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this point to get all those pieces arranged, designed, everything to the point we had finished it, it would've taken years. What we got authority to do is to put it into pieces, and we did that. We broke this west bank piece into nine pieces, and we moved forward but we, in no way, shortcutted the environmental compliance process. No. It's under an EIS. It's under a separate authority and a separate study. That project has been underway for two years. We have not been able to finish it because we can't get a 16 million yard to borrow it through

Opening speaker: Let's, now, if you want to go ahead and answer, we'll get to those other questions when you get up.

Nadine Parker: Hi, I'm Nadine Parker from Jesuit Bend. My family and I moved here back in November of 2008. When we did our research, apparently, we did not have current information or bad information, didn't go to the right place, it doesn't matter. We had no idea there was a flood gate going up. So, when I got home from my trip on Sunday and I saw that this flood gate was taking place, I was a bit concerned. When I hear the people that have stepped up today as well as the information that I read on the internet from the Corps of Engineers and others, I think, you know, I'm very scared. I'm scared for the safety of my family, I'm scared for my property, and of course, economic impact to our family. I think you have heard multiple arguments tonight that substantiates that. My question is to you, sir, it is my understanding, number one, that you have to sign off on this flood gate. Is that correct, on this project? What can we do, I understand the authorization, I understand the process. I've been in the government, I've worked for the government, I understand that more than anybody because I was in the process business. That's what I did, I wrote this process, not the ones you're working on, to be sure. [Laughter.] But, you know, I understand processes and I understand the importance of following processes, don't care at this point. What can I do to get you to go back to congress and say, maybe this isn't such a great idea? What other comments do you need? I'm not in commerce, I am not an engineer, I cannot put together all this and do our research and say, here it is on a platform but I think that it's very obvious that this is not necessarily the best thing for Plaquemines Parish. What can I do to convince you to at least stand up and say, you know, maybe we should re-think this thing?

Male engineer: I think earlier, somebody covered it but I'll reinforce it. The most efficient way for you to address this is through your local and state representatives and your local Parish and then also the comments that you provided here tonight for us to consider when we're making a decision. So, it's not a done deal. I'm the one that makes the decision, I haven't seen a piece of paper on this project that asks me to approve it. So, that's what I want people to understand and this is a process, and I've heard comments here tonight that people want to extend that process, and I will consider those and make a determination on whether we need to extend the public comment process. So, that's my commitment is to evaluate

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the, that's why I came tonight because I knew it was important. I don't come to all the public meetings but I knew this was an important public meeting and that's why I'm here.

Nadine Parker: We're definitely working through our government. I think everyone here, and there's probably going to be a flood of emails and letters and whatever the case may be but we also need to get the picture, the point across to you, that this is important to Plaquemines Parish, this is important to the people who live here, and we should do something about his.

Male engineer: I hear that loud and clear. It's very effective in everybody's comments tonight.

Nadine Parker: What is your opinion after hearing this tonight? That's a good question.

Male engineer: Well, I mean, I've got to evaluate all the comments. I've heard some of them and they're some compelling comments for us to look at this a little more and I'm taking that into consideration.

Nadine Parker: Great. Thank you.

Jason Kaliszeske: Good evening, my name is Jason Kaliszeske. Two quick comments. First, I'm a recent new homeowner in Jesuit Bend and I can promise you when driving around looking for houses, if I would've driven past a 17-foot flood wall, or however high it's going to be, that's passed Captain Larry's, I would've made a u-turn, gone back north, and said well, that's it, I'm not looking any further south. So, there is definitely an economic impact on myself and my family. My other comment was on that pump that you say is not very large. Where exactly is that pumping to? Is there an existing canal there or is it pumping into the back of the canal and then will then have to be pumped out by our Ollie pump station?

Male engineer: The current location of the pump station is right about here. There is also a 48-inch drainage ditch that goes into the canal that's right, that runs along Mr. Perez's property.

Jason Kaliszeske: So, the discharge of this pump is going to, basically, go into, is going to have to be pumped out with the Ollie pump station?

Male engineer: That drainage is going to the Ollie Canal, just like it currently does.

Opening speaker: Please, let him answer the question.

Male engineer: Just like it currently does.

Jason Kaliszeske: I understand that but looking at the map, I mean, its common sense that I probably does drain that way, now. Instead of, there's Hero Canal, I don't know

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how far away that is, there's another possible choice of where the water could be draining to. You know, instead of hurting the Ollie pump station that's already hurting now, why even hurt it more, you know, why put more water in the system to be pumped out twice? Pump out once on the other side of that 56-foot levee.

[Multiple background speakers at once]

Male engineer: But it is right now.

Opening speaker: Okay. We've got people lined up to ask questions. Could you please just get in line? Okay. Go ahead with your question.

Alan Martin: My name is Alan Martin and I live in Jesuit Bend. I am against the flood gate; I do want that stated for the record. What you're leaving us with while we're out fighting for our homes is you're leaving us with worthless real estate as of July 1st, 2004, there's a disclosure act. I can't sell my property without telling them this. So, I will be stuck with a piece of property that no one will want to buy. So, technically, if this goes through, you're telling me that what I've got it what I've got. Exactly. So, in 1996, had I been aware of any of this, I would've never built in Jesuit Bend, never. Exactly. If I wanted to live down the road, I would've moved down the road. I don't appreciate in the IRE 13 being referred to as lower Plaquemines. I'm not lower Plaquemines. There's a big difference. You have to live here to understand it. My address is Belle Chasse. Thank you.

[Applause]

Alan Green: Good evening everyone. My name is Alan Green, I'm president of the Oakville Community Action Group. My question is to the Corps of Engineers, since you see a lot of people from the lower part of the Parish's here tonight, that wasn't aware that they wasn't in the protection plan. Now, we know that what took place happened from the previous administration, what can we do, what can our Parish, or what can our Parish officials do, right now, to put the lower part of the Parish with the 100-year protection plan?

Female engineer: I think we spoke a little bit to it earlier but I'll state it again because I know folks have joined us. You know, you can work with your local government and your state government as well as your congressional representation, you know, to ask them to look into giving additional authority to provide 100-year protection to those areas.

Alan Green: In other words, you're saying we still have a possibility that having this levee going to the lower part of the Parish?

Female engineer: I'm saying, you know, we're trying to move forward the two projects that we described tonight but beyond that, there's a process that additional authority,

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things that can be done to make more protection be authorized and constructed in the future, working with your local, state and congressional delegation.

Alan Green: Okay. So, if we talk to our Parish president? We need congressmen? We got to go further?

Female engineer: Right. I didn't make that clear. It's a, congress would have to authorize against the Corps permission to put a 100-year protection in all the communities south of Oakville that we've heard about tonight. The process isn't that, to use, it comes from the people. The people have the right to request, through their congressional delegation. Now, the Corps responsibility is that when asked by congress to assess that inquiry is to produce a report but even for us to study the feasibility of doing a 100-year project, congress has to tell us to do that. So, in simple terms, the process is this... I know but we all have congressional representation, so the way the process works, the way all these things happen was, people work with congress to get it authorized or to ask the Corps to write reports to inform them on the science and the engineering and...

[Multiple background speakers at once]

Female engineer: I understand that there are lots of folks that live in that area.

[Multiple background speakers at once]

Male speaker: Okay. I guess my first comment is to say that we should be included in consideration of west bank because when the original authorization was made in 1936, or whatever, in Jesuit Bend, I moved down here about that time from Belle Chasse. I moved down here to the country. They did have a lot of cattle pastures and a lot of orange groves, in fact, the property I'm on now was once an orange grove. So, when this was, when you got your marching orders on this proposal, I think is what you called it, I just said it, authorization, it's true, that was just pastures. But, now, since that time, I'll reiterate it, there's over 600+ homes down here, now, and I don't know why we can't amend or include this in that objective.

Male engineer: Sir, I would recommend, if you have documents that you'd like to present to us to put in the official record.

[Multiple speakers at once]

Male engineer: About the numbers and homes, and other property and things like that, that's what we're here for.

Male speaker: Okay.

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Male engineer: To get your input.

Male speaker: I don't have an official because I'm not an official.

Male engineer: That's okay, its official coming from you.

Male speaker: Okay. I went on Google Maps and went to I-view and one, two, three, there's 263 houses between Oakville and Ollie Canal.

Male engineer: We encourage you to leave that with us and we'd be glad to put that in the records.

Male speaker: So, my comment would be to include all of the residence because of the increased population growth since the 1996.

Opening speaker: I can guarantee you, we heard you say that. We got that.

Male speaker: Okay.

Opening speaker: We need to keep moving on.

Male speaker: Second comment.

Opening speaker: Make it quick, please.

Male speaker: Before the flood gate would be built, I mean, that's fine, continue with your levee, raise the levees and all but before the flood gate be built, a true EIA study be made of the impact of the residence and so in and the properties I've just addressed. I mean, I counted houses, there's business down there, there's, you know, so the evaluation of that land, the evaluation of that land is phenomenal.

Opening speaker: We've got people backing up behind you, if we can kind of wrap it up.

Male speaker: Okay.

Opening speaker: Maybe get back at the end at start again because I think we've heard these before. Thank you.

Male speaker: I didn't say anything before.

Opening speaker: Okay.

Murray Armstrong: Hello, my name is Murry Armstrong, I'm a resident of...

Opening speaker: We can't hear, if you can kind of hold it down, please, so we can hear the question.

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Murray Armstrong: Okay. First, a lot of what everyone is alluding to, you know, the population increase and all the Jesuit Bend and including Belle Chasse is a result of past storms down the road. I'm from Buras, my family doesn't live in Buras anymore, either by choice from years ago after Camille or later than that or the ones that just got their teeth kicked in a couple years ago by Katrina and then by all of the insurance stuff that came by after that. A couple of questions I have, one for the Colonel over here, really back to what this lady had said, if this project process is going to be slowed down, if these comments don't get wrapped up by May 4th, okay, exactly how much time are they going to give you to look at all of our feedback so this thing can go forward on May 5th? Are they going to give you your cup of morning coffee and say, hey, sir, Colonel, we need your answer, what's the deal?

Male engineer: It's all based on a number of factors. One is, how many comments there are. So, some of the IER's we've got have been very minimal comments. I'm projecting they'll be quite a few comments here. So, based on what I'm seeing from the turn-out, so if we take that into account, I mean, we have to roll up the comments, we have to evaluate the comments and then they make a recommendation to me, I mean, it's a process. So, you know there is nothing that we're going to do because the 4th of May is a date that's going to jeopardize the public input and the evaluation of the comments that's sent to me. All that is, is a marker of right now, as of today, the public comment period ends on the 4th of May, that's all that date is. That doesn't mean I make a decision the next morning with a cup of coffee, that's not what that date's about.

Murray Armstrong: Well, that being said, I've heard at least 10 people stand up here tonight and ask for more time to consider including Jesuit Bend all the way past Alliance, and even consideration to federalize levees further down into the Parish into this same project. Instead of putting up a wall and saying, well for now, it ends here. So, if this 100-year storm comes again and hits us in this period of time, well, sorry, we're sorry it happened in 2012, the project is to be completed in 2014. And, the last thing I have is, with this pump station they're going to put back out over here, okay, they just made the comment a moment ago that it's going to pump down to us and it's got to come through the Ollie pump station which is not a large pump station. It probably is stressed enough during a storm to handle rain, much less a storm, to handle the water from Jesuit Bend. So, now we've got to deal with this bilge pump up here that's going to pump everything through this canal. Did anyone do a study on the capacity of the Ollie pump station to see what it handles now, what its load is, and what the affects of this additional load would be on it because I don't think in this additional tie-in, this non-federal project, that there's anything in it for an additional pump station. I haven't seen anything. Is there?

Female engineer: We're still working on the design of the pump station that we're proposing. Right now, this area drains through a ditch, south.

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Murray Armstong: On the outside of a levee.

Female engineer: Right. The water is, the water drains this direction south. Okay. When we build this levee, we cut off that water's ability to flow south. We don't want the water to start staking up behind the levee systems. So, to account, it's already going there in a ditch instead of going...

Murray Armstrong: No, ma'am, it's not, no, ma'am it is not. It is going to the outside of the existing non-federal levee. When you put a pump station on the corner of where that non-existing, non-federal levee meets where this current project is coming, you're going to pump it into Jesuit Bend.

Female engineer: It's being discharged here.

Murray Armstrong: No, like I'm saying. He's pointing out to it. Your new pump station is pumping it behind my house. Okay.

Female engineer: Okay. Let me just say this, we'll take that comment into consideration and we will look at that but with the information we have tell us so far is that the water is already flowing in an open ditch in that direction, and we're going to just pump it over what we build. Based on your comment tonight, we're going to look back at that, if that's not that case, we're obligated to make adjustments to address that concern.

Murray Armstrong: Well, if you're obligated to make adjustments to address that, maybe you all want to add a little time in to make adjustments to this whole project and incorporate it all together.

Opening speaker: Okay. Thank you.

[Applause]

Charlene Martin: My name is Charlene Martin, I live at 233 Wilson Street, Belle Chasse, Louisiana. I'd like to applaud this lady for getting her action done. You sit here, which some people view very condescending, with the little smirks. My view is I don't agree with this. Maybe we need to put a 16-foot wall of people across the highway, get a little national coverage and someone will listen and not smile at me and say they're listening to me. How can this go another meeting on the 4th and then all of the sudden on the 5th you're going to make a decision? Who's listening to what we're saying? We need somebody to see what we're saying. Okay. Yeah, let's stop the seafood, let's stop the refinery, 16-foot people, arrest us all, and then maybe, maybe somebody will listen.

[Applause]

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- Male speaker: What's the email address that all of these concerned citizens...
- Female engineer: Yeah, we do have a slide that shows the ways you can...
- Male speaker: Do you have a handout?
- Female engineer: Yeah.
- Male speaker: A lot of people don't have paper and pencils.
- Female engineer: We do have handouts in the back, yes.
- Male speaker: Make sure you get a handout. Is it, the email address is on the handout?
- Female engineer: Right. There's a website, there's a mailing address, some phone numbers, and an email address, and we have handouts with those in the back.
- Male speaker: Thank you. Okay. Okay. Does that include Colonel's address? Okay. He asked me to ask that one. Thank you. That was all I had. Thank you.
- Opening speaker: Thanks. Next speaker. Hello?
- Gene Guerrero: Sorry. Gene Guerrero, again, from Belle Chasse, Louisiana. What I would like to tell you all, last comment is, you all just take, I know you've all heard a lot of angriness and that coming from us. You all need to take all your Corps, congress people and that, take and put yourselves in our shoes. If somebody was coming in your subdivision, in your community, to put a flood gate up that we think is ridiculous, which is ridiculous, because of the other levees should go up first, how would you all feel? Could you all sleep? I just want to say, if you all can sleep at night after what you all have been doing to us. I want to thank you all for this because, really, a lot of people have lost sleep, a lot of people are sick. Yeah. People have stopped doing things right now to get involved with this, and really, I want to tell you, it's really upsetting to us, and really, we really would thank you all to look into it a lot more than what you are doing. And, like I said, the last comment is, class action lawsuit to stop you all. So, if we can't get any other help, we'll have to do it that way. Or, drape ourselves down across the roads. Okay. So, you all can turn around and not look.
- Jamie Stavros: My name is Jamie Stavros, and I live in Jesuit Bend, and about Katrina timeframe, my husband could have retired from the Military and we didn't. We were told to come back, be a part of the community, and fight to bring everything back up. Well, pretty much this wall is just going to be tearing us back down, and being that you're in the Military, I'm just learning about the Corps, through education now, but you are a Military member, right? I've never known of the military trying to break-up communities. I thought you're suppose to fight for

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America, fight for communities, and bring us together, not try to tear us apart. I hope you see the passion here tonight from everybody in this room. I respect people in the Military and I hope you respect us, too, as a group, as a community, as all of Plaquemines Parish. We want to stay together and we want you to help us stay together because this is what we're about right here. We'll work whatever you need to help you out but please go further than one mile in the future to see what is there because we have a big vivacious community here that you can see tonight. I don't know how it got ignored. I don't have any more words but please fight for us. That is your job as a Military member, that is your all's job. You guys are, you know, suppose to be looking out after us. You have families. I'm ashamed for tonight. I really am ashamed.

[Applause]

Julie Olsen: Hi, my name's Julie Olsen, and I live in north Belle Chasse but I own property in Jesuit Bend, so I figured I should be at this meeting tonight. I appreciate that everyone here had a rough job having to face us. I know you had your talking point that started to sound like repeated rhetoric to us, and we were starting to tune you out because we felt like you were tuning us out and not giving us any direct answers. You would go right back to your talking point. So, I wanted to go on the record that I am also against the flood gate. I believe Jesuit Bend and through Conoco Phillips should be included in the protected area however you determine it should be protected. I want to second Mr. Landry's recommendation of the proposal for the deadline to be extended beyond May 4th, and along with that extension to postpone the meeting that is scheduled at the auditorium this Monday to allow time for us to get our elected representatives to that meeting so we will have them with us also. If we have the meeting on Monday, and we don't have the representatives there because he's already tried to get them, that really won't help too much in that aspect and we understand we need those people to help fight for us also. So, I just wanted to let you know my opinion on it.

Opening speaker: Thank you.

[Applause]

Stanley Gaudet: Stanley Gaudet. I'm very concerned about the people north of the flood gate. I don't think there was a study done. You're putting a pump, a small pump station and when we have a major storm and a major rain event, you could create a lot more flooding, especially here in Oakville and north of the flood gate. Have you all done a study on the impact that it would have on a major rain event 14 inches and when we have a southeast wind blowing the head pressure against a small pump or have you considered if you are going to do it putting a pump to pump the water in the river? Because, you could very well create more problems north of the flood gate as well as south of the flood gate. The flood gate is not a good

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idea. We don't want the flood gate. It's not a good idea. I don't think it will impact the community in a positive way and I think you all need to consider that.

Opening speaker: Thank you. I think we're ready for the video. Okay. So, we're going to watch her. Tell us a little bit about it.

Robin Zuvitch: Well, like I said, we're trying to educate ourselves on the EIR 13 and this pertains to the environment, section 3.1, in particular when it comes up, I'll talk to you about it. And, sir, we appreciate all that you all do for us, I want you to know that. We know you all do a lot of good things for us but we want you to consider our families and our children and you're going to see just a little bit of what we're talking about. We have our school in this area, we have our nursing home, and many of the people from Oakville, they're there, many of people of all parts of Belle Chasse are there.

Male speaker: Ma'am, go back to, yeah.

Male speaker: This is what we have to do. United we stand, divided we fall. If the wall comes up, people on the south side, we fall. We don't have a choice, we have to try to **[Inaudible 03:00:34]** the EIR 13. This is your proposal which everybody seen, you had it posted up, I got that off the internet.

Robin Zuvitch: I want you all to look at this section. This is what really caught my eye when I was trying to learn about this in such a short time. Section 3.1.2.2, Oakville. This is what they say about us. Now, the line right before the red line, it says, currently the FEMA trailer park has been decommissioned, however, the landowner is allowing recreational vehicles to use this site. This is what they say about us, adjacent areas to the south of Oakville are comprised of pasture lands and scattered citrus groves. Now, the fellow was saying about the word adjacent. Adjacent has three meanings. So, you can take it many different ways. It could be the local area, near a certain point. So, sir, I would like for you to see, the local area near this point. Various subdivisions, businesses and churches, Plaquemines Parish's citrus industry, agricultural nurseries, River Bend Nursing Rehab Home, and we are so proud of that home, that we don't have to send our elders out of our community. We fought for that for many years. Plaquemines Parish's only nursing home. Belle Chasse's middle school, public school system, Conoco Phillips refinery, that's the refinery which is only seven miles south of here.

Male speaker: This is where you guys, this is where we start right below **[Inaudible 03:05:16]**. This is some of the residential areas that your study hasn't covered. Some of the people that **[Inaudible 03:05:20]** Highway 23. And, I just took random.

Robin Zuvitch: This is going up just a little further. Yes.

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- Male speaker: To show you people what is there.
- Robin Zuvitch: This is all the developed areas.
- Male speaker: This will all be flooded if that gate goes up. The first major hurricane we have.
- Robin Zuvitch: These homes range from \$350,000 to over one million. More subdivisions. This is, all these subdivisions have been developed within the last, 1989 is when it began. This is our middle school. There's our nursing home, its right by the river, it's a beautiful place. There's oak trees, our old folks can go sit outside they can feel the breeze. It's heaven, it's a little piece of heaven on earth. Residential areas, citrus industry.
- Male speaker: One thing about this, you all say it's scattered orange grove. This is a major industry of Plaquemines Parish. **[Inaudible 03:07 Speaking too low.]** I mean, that is a major industry.
- Robin Zuvitch: The oranges, yes, and they're the best navels in the world. That's right.
- [Faint speaker in background]
- Robin Zuvitch: Yes. Tomatoes are coming soon. The creole, you can't beat those creole tomatoes.
- [Multiple background speakers]
- Robin Zuvitch: Petroleum industry, Conoco Phillips refinery which services, employs so many people of our Parish, and that's where we would recommend the levee going.
- Male speaker: This is right across from my house. This is where **[Inaudible 03:09] Speaking too low.**
- Robin Zuvitch: We're struggling.
- Male speaker: **[Inaudible 03:09 Speaking too low.]**
- Robin Zuvitch: No.
- Male speaker: But I'm talking, it's a major...
- Robin Zuvitch: It's a place where our children can run and have fun and we feel safe in our neighborhoods. No crime. It's the best place in the world to live and we don't want to give it up.
- Male speaker: **[Inaudible 02:52:09]**

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- Robin Zuvitch : That's a local little business right across the street from my subdivision.
- Male speaker: **[Inaudible 03:11:24]** there are a lot of churches on the other end, too, that are going to be affected by this.
- Robin Zuvitch: There's our firehouse. That's one of the nurseries. That's the nursing home. You see the beautiful setting? You can't even see it real well, it's oak trees and it's by the river.
- Male speaker: **[Inaudible 03:12:48]**
- Robin Zuvitch: Yes. Yes. We could go see her every day.
- Male speaker: **[Inaudible 03:12:00]**
- Robin Zuvitch: This is one of our local churches. It may be a historical site, I don't know, I'll have to check into that. A new church being built. Cemeteries which have been there a while, too, that's another site we can check into.
- Male speaker: **[Inaudible 03:13:38]** So, we can show you guys. We know this is your public meeting but we're here to tell you that there's more to this meeting than what you have seen in the past.
- Robin Zuvitch: And, we won't stop here. If our local officials don't help you, we'll go to congress, we'll got to Washington. We'll form a group, we will raise money, we will do whatever we have to do but we're hoping that you can guide us, sir, in this. We want your help. We don't want to be enemies, we want you to help us.
- Male speaker: You look at this slide, if we get this, if we don't stop this IER 13, this is what we're going to look like. This is Jesuit Bend after post-Katrina.
- Robin Zuvitch: We didn't get flooded but see how close it was. Some did.
- [Multiple background speaker]
- Robin Zuvitch: Now, this is showing that we don't want that. Yes.
- [Multiple background speakers]
- Robin Zuvitch: That's Buras, where, and that's where I originally lived, sir, so I've grown up in this area. My parents lost in Betsy, they lost in Camille.
- male speaker: **[Inaudible 03:15:56 Speaking too low.]** This house, right here, this is a true story, this home had water eight foot in the top section. What you're seeing right now is probably five foot deep.

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Robin Zuvitch: So, you're probably thinking, well, why would they stay in this area? Because, this is our home.

Male speaker: **[Inaudible 03:16:15]** A 20-foot tidal surge, I don't care what you do, is going to hurt us. And, having a 12-foot levee on this side, that wall and 16-foot here, that is definitely going to hurt us. **[Inaudible 03:17:34 Speaking too low.]**

Robin Zuvitch: Thank you for allowing us to do this, and we can have a copy for you if you would like. We appreciate it.

[Applause]

Robin Zuvitch: And, one more comment. People, the only people who can help us is our congressmen. I don't have faith in our local, I don't have any faith, I'm sorry. Congressmen **[Inaudible 03:8:13 Multiple speakers.]**

Male engineer: For those who have not seen the website, www.plaquemineslevee.com, will be the way we pass out information about the next meeting. And, please, encourage everybody, if we're going to leave now, to make sure you're here Monday.

Opening speaker: Yeah, don't leave just yet, we're going to give you the contact information, if you don't have it. It's on the flyers in the back, the email, phone numbers. If you don't find it there, we're going to get the screen up but just come up and see me and I'll make sure you get that.

Male engineer: And, there are handouts in the back of the room. Feel free to grab one on your way out if you need to get one, and the information is also on the website if you need to access that.

Opening speaker: All right. Everybody, we all enjoyed you company. You've got a lot of information to digest. We all look forward to seeing you Monday at the auditorium unless there's some further development about a postponement. Good luck. God bless. Thank you much.

[End of recording]