



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, VICKSBURG DISTRICT
4155 CLAY ST
VICKSBURG MS 39183

January 29, 2026

Regional Planning and Environment
Division South
Environmental Planning Branch

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE
Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) AND 401 Water Quality Application

Introduction. This Joint Public Notice is issued in accordance with provisions of Title 33 CFR Parts 336.1(b)(1) and 337.1, and 40 CFR 121 which establish policy, practices, and procedures to be followed on Federal actions involving the disposal of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. It also serves as a joint Public Notice for the LEDQ 401 Water Quality Application. The J. Bennett Johnston (JBJ) Waterway serves as a vital conduit for affordable transportation, driving economic prosperity in the region. The overall purpose of this project is to improve navigation efficiencies for the channel through providing an authorized 12-FT navigation channel depth in the JBJ Waterway and the five locks and dams on the waterway. Maintaining a 12-FT channel on the JBJ Waterway will result in transportation cost savings by increasing carrying capacity and eliminating the need for industries to “light load.” The Draft Feasibility Report with integrated Environmental Assessment can be accessed online at the following location: <https://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Programs-and-Project-Management/Project-Management/JBJW-12-Ft-Channel-Feasibility-Study/>

Project Authority. This study effort is authorized by Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2018, section 1201:

The Secretary is authorized to conduct a feasibility study for the following projects for water resources development and conservation and other purposes, as identified in the reports titled “Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development” submitted to Congress on March 17, 2017, and February 5, 2018, respectively, pursuant to section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 2282d) or otherwise reviewed by Congress: (3) J. BENNETT JOHNSTON WATERWAY, LOUISIANA.—Project for navigation, JBJ Waterway, Louisiana.

Location. The JBJ Waterway crosses ten northwest and central Louisiana parishes: Bossier, Caddo, Red River, Winn, Natchitoches, Grant, Rapides, Avoyelles, Catahoula, and Concordia. The JBJ Waterway project is authorized from Old River Control Complex to the I-220 Bridge near Shreveport, Louisiana. All proposed features of the project are located primarily within the JBJ Waterway.

Description of Work. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Water Quality Certificate applicant), Vicksburg District (CEMVK), or its contractor, proposes to increase portions of the JBJ Waterway from 9-FT to the authorized 12-FT depth.

The proposed plan is composed of 3 components:

1. The main project work would consist of stonework improvements to eight existing dikes in order to achieve a 12-FT draft. The stonework will be used to lengthen or heighten the existing dikes to support self-scour. After a high-water season, which typically occurs between the months of December and May, the navigation channel bed is expected to self-scour after these dike improvements are complete.
2. Deviation from EM 1110-2-1604 to transit through the locks and dams during periods of low water. The Engineering Research and Development Center will construct a physical model and perform operational tests to ensure that 12-FT draft vessels can safely pass through Lock & Dam 2 at normal pool elevations. The results of this physical modeling will likely support the deviation. The approved deviation will increase the amount of time that a 12-FT draft vessel can pass through Lock & Dam 2 from 42 to 90 percent of the time.
3. Draft restrictions during periods of extreme drought or low water. The draft restrictions will be managed by the Coast Guard and will continue to be utilized during periods of extreme drought or low water. The deviation would be used to inform the limits of draft restriction to allow for more use of the 12-FT channel during periods of extreme drought or low water.

Discharges by Others. There are no known discharges of fill material by others at or near the proposed project site.

Coordination. This public notice will be coordinated with the relevant State, Federal and Tribal entities as appropriate.

Properties Adjacent to Disposal Sites. List of adjacent properties is available upon request.

Evaluation Factors. Evaluation includes application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through 40 CFR 230. The proposed project would have minimal impacts on environmental resources and no direct impacts to terrestrial cultural resources would occur since no land-based construction or tree clearing is planned. No mitigation would be required for this project.

Public Involvement. This Joint Public Notice for the 404(b)(1) Evaluation and 401 water quality application will be available for a 30-day public review and comment period beginning January 30, 2026, and ending February 28, 2026. The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties under the Clean Water Act 401 and 404. The 404(b)(1) Evaluation is available online and for download beginning January 30, 2026, at the following weblink: <https://go.mil/6ukd4t3ned>

Comments on the 404(b)(1) evaluation must be transmitted by February 28, 2026. Interested parties may express their views on the draft document. All comments postmarked on or before the expiration of the comment period will be considered.

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by deposition of excavated or dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the identified interest may be affected by the proposed action. You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.

Comments on the LEDQ 401 Water Quality application must be transmitted by February 28, 2026. A copy of the application is available for inspection and review at the LDEQ Public Records Center at 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The available information can also be accessed electronically on the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) on the LDEQ public website at www.deq.louisiana.gov.

COMMENTS CONCERNING THE 404(b)(1) EVALUATION MAY BE MAILED TO:

Department of the Army
Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
ATTN: Taylor Piefke (CEMVN-PDS)
4155 CLAY ST, Room 250
VICKSBURG MS 39183

Comments may also be submitted by email to taylor.piefke@usace.army.mil

COMMENTS CONCERNING THE 401 APPLICATION:

Comments concerning this application can be filed with the Water Permits Division during the public comment period by referencing WQC 251030-04, Agency Interest (AI) 249680 to the following address:

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Water Permits Division
P.O. Box 4313
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4313
Attn: Water Quality Certifications

Comments may be submitted by email to DEQ-WaterQualityCertifications@la.gov.

Daniel Moore
Environmental Compliance Chief
Regional Planning and
Environmental Department South

COMMENT PERIOD FOR THIS PUBLIC NOTICE EXPIRES: February 28, 2026