

1 TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARING OF
2 USACE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT
3 PROJECT MEETING
4 JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
5 DATE: May 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

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8 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Vicksburg District
9 public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
10 Management Project was held at Sparkman
11 Auditorium, 1150 Lakeland Drive, Jackson,
12 Mississippi beginning at 6:04 p.m.

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22 REPORTED BY: Dawn Dillard, CCR 1763

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 Army Corps of Engineers:

3 Thomas R. Shaw
4 Robyn Colosimo
5 Colonel Christopher Klein
6 Brandon Davis

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1 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Good afternoon. I'd
2 like to welcome you to our fourth session
3 public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
4 Management Project. As I mentioned we
5 already had three sessions. Two yesterday in
6 Slidell, Louisiana with one being here this
7 afternoon at 1:00 p.m. My name is Tom Shaw.
8 I am the project manager for Vicksburg
9 District for this project. I've got a few
10 open remarks, but before I do so I would like
11 to recognize our panel.

12 On your far right is Robyn Colosimo.
13 She is the deputy assistant secretary of the
14 Army for project planning and policy review.
15 Next to her is Vicksburg District Commander
16 Colonel Christopher Klein. And next to the
17 Commander is Brandon Davis. Brandon is
18 Planning Liaison with the Regional Planning
19 Environment Division South.

20 And so a few housekeeping things just to
21 make sure we don't miss anything is, is when
22 you came in you probably came in that door
23 there and there's another exit here and
24 there's at least one more right here, so if
25 anything were to happen I want to be sure

1 people can get out.

2 So when you came in the door there is a
3 sign-in list and a lot of people were putting
4 their information on it. It's not required
5 but we would love to have a record of you
6 attending this for the public record because
7 all of what we're doing will become part of
8 that record.

9 This is, of course, is a face to face
10 session, but we actually -- this is going on
11 virtually as well on a Webex site, and so if
12 you will permit me to give you what we call
13 our rules of engagement. So when we get
14 through with the presentation here you'll
15 have an opportunity to come up here to give
16 us feedback, input, comments, if you will.
17 Go to the microphone stations there. I would
18 ask that you try to limit your comments to
19 about three minutes so that the -- we do have
20 a good many people here and we'd love
21 everybody that wants to provide any to be
22 able to do so.

23 In addition to that there are multiple
24 ways that we can collect information. And so
25 you'll see on some -- the following slide

1 presentations there is a website that you can
2 go to to find information. There is an
3 e-mail site that you can send your comments
4 or feedback to. There's also comment cards
5 up front, which you can actually fill out a
6 hard copy.

7 And then one of the things that I would
8 like to be sure is, is that you see we got
9 some study boards over here that indicate the
10 area of the study under consideration.
11 There's a board over there that's got kind of
12 a red section of the lower part of the Pearl.
13 If you would please place a push pin in there
14 if you don't mind. We would like to know,
15 you know, where you're from and where your
16 concerns at -- relate to.

17 So with that I think we are good to go.
18 So why we're here. We're here to provide
19 some information to you and hope to have a
20 little bit of an educational experience, but
21 also, like I said, we want feedback. We want
22 your input into assisting us in moving
23 forward with this process. So there is a
24 term that you are going to hear that is
25 called the non-federal interest. The

1 non-federal interest in this case for this
2 particular project is the Rankin Hinds Pearl
3 River Flood and Drainage Control District.
4 The authorizations, the Corps basically can't
5 do anything without authorization and
6 appropriation. So the authorization is
7 listed up there for you. We will go into
8 those in detail, we'll talk about the Pearl
9 River Project.

10 Any of you from anywhere around Jackson,
11 Mississippi you understand the issues that
12 occur on the Pearl. The Pearl flooded many
13 times and we will talk about the history of
14 the project a little bit.

15 And so how we got here today. The
16 non-federal interest submitted their draft
17 feasibility study, environmental impact
18 study. Excuse me, they submitted that to the
19 ASA, Assistant Secretary of the Army, for
20 Civil Works back in July of 2022. The ASA
21 made comments and there were some data gaps
22 they identified that they charged the Corps
23 of Engineers with trying to fill in those
24 data gaps to provide the information back to
25 them. And we will talk about the review

1 process in some depth. So with that I'm
2 going to turn it over to Ms. Colosimo.

3 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Thanks everybody for
4 taking time out of your day to be here and to
5 share with us your experiences and views on
6 what success looks like for the Pearl River
7 drainage. I can't thank you enough. The
8 three sessions we've had so far have been
9 well attended and have shared a lot of great
10 information. This is most important as we
11 work through this process to address flood
12 risk management problems in the Pearl
13 drainage area that have long plagued
14 communities and you all know it much better
15 than I do.

16 My name is Robyn Colosimo, and I do
17 oversee the project planning and review in
18 the Army Civil Works office. You're going to
19 hear my boss in a minute. And just quickly
20 what that office does is we provide oversight
21 for the Corps of Engineers. That's twentyish
22 people that are overseeing 40,000 people
23 through the mission that puts forward
24 projects like what's being proposed and
25 considered here in the Pearl drainage. So

1 those things have to come through my office
2 to ultimately get to my boss to clear and go
3 to Congress. And so I'll come back to that.
4 I just wanted to give a sense of what we do
5 because it's not always clear. So with that,
6 let's play the video from my boss,
7 Mr. Conner.

8 (Video played.)

9 MS. COLOSINO: We are honored to have
10 Colonel Conner as our leader. He has vast
11 experience solving complex water problems at
12 federal and regional levels including a prior
13 assignment as Deputy Secretary of Department
14 of Interior. And being in the federal
15 government that's really important, because
16 leveraging and understanding how other
17 agencies are able to solve problems in
18 similar ways across the government is hugely
19 important particularly in issues like this.

20 He is ultimately the decision maker here
21 for any recommendations relative to how to
22 use the funds that have been allocated by the
23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law relative to
24 flooding in Jackson and more involvement as
25 we go through this next bit of presentations.

1 Big thing here is he wants to make sure we
2 are engaging the public regarding work
3 underway and that is what today is all about.

4 Why are we here? We're really here to
5 advance that flood risk management solution
6 after decades of flooding in Jackson. We
7 can't say that enough that you all know that
8 better than I do. For more than a hundred
9 years, headwater flooding on the Pearl has
10 caused disruption of businesses and industry
11 throughout Jackson, Mississippi. 5,000
12 commercial and residential structures have
13 been involved. Impacts of a population
14 greater than a half million. Multiple floods
15 in '79 and '83 and more recently '20 and '22.
16 Mr. Conner and I were here in '22 as he noted
17 as the water rain started to come. We
18 happened to actually be at pump station
19 talking about the age of some of these pumps
20 your town has maintained them. And as we
21 were leaving and arriving back home we were
22 finding out how bad that rain was that was
23 coming. So it was very poignant to have been
24 here and see what emerged right after that.

25 The 1979 event, in particular, flooded

1 transportation routes, homes and businesses
2 and cost more than 220 million dollars in
3 damages in 1979 value. So that's crazy when
4 you think about it today.

5 The highest crest was in 2020 and most
6 notably impacted two minority and two low
7 income areas of Jackson.

8 The Pearl River also has tremendous
9 environmental value including wetlands that
10 filter waters that eventually flow into the
11 Gulf of Mexico and support thousands of
12 geese, ducks and migratory birds.

13 From my view and my boss' view, for
14 decades the Corps and non-federal interest
15 has fought to solve the flood mismanagement
16 problem of Jackson, but for one, the lack of
17 the project justification; two, community
18 support; and three, funding have stalled
19 meaningful progress.

20 We do look forward to working with you
21 to solve this and moving past that long
22 plagued community situation and delivering.
23 Next slide please.

24 In terms of federal interest we have to
25 be very clear about how we got here and where

1 we go. We'll go in a little bit more detail
2 as we move through is fundamentally, it's
3 just the way we see it.

4 In 1986 Congress directed the Corps to
5 plan, design, and implement a flood risk
6 management project. Essentially to study,
7 design, construct. That authority in and of
8 itself is unusual. You usually have to plan,
9 come up with a plan, and then go back to
10 Congress to get authority to design and
11 ultimately implement.

12 So you already had what seemed like a
13 streamline process at the time, but we
14 weren't able to deliver a project.

15 In 2007 that authorization was modified
16 to further allow the ASA(CW) to make a
17 decision on what that plan is and that's
18 where we have derived most of what we bring
19 today going forward is that my boss can make
20 that determination subject to what that
21 authority says and we'll discuss that in a
22 bit more detail.

23 And then in 2018, specific to the
24 direction there was the highlighting of the
25 need to include an analysis of potential

1 downstream impacts. We were in Slidell last
2 night and heard a lot about that. That
3 direction was just to signify how important
4 it was to make sure these projects don't
5 implicate challenges in other areas by
6 solving something here. Always a good
7 business model. Encompassing all of that, of
8 course, is making sure it's a project worthy
9 of economic justification broadened to
10 include a number of benefits.

11 Bottom line, federal interest for
12 decades but there wasn't a plan and there
13 wasn't funding. So what's now different?
14 It's a tremendous opportunity created by the
15 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The boss just
16 quickly mentioned that, but money has been
17 set aside in that law for Jackson. The
18 question is how that money will be used to
19 address flood risk management. And so that
20 provides this small window of opportunity
21 with tremendous value to Jackson to get after
22 of these flood problems that have been long
23 stalled. Advancing solutions now happen
24 quickly and I was talking to a few people
25 before the meeting and even in the meetings

1 prior, it's really fundamental, and I can't
2 say this enough, is once we get to a point
3 where there's information to put forward and
4 my boss makes the decision, we quickly move
5 to design and construction because we have
6 that responsibility and we have those funds
7 on hand. You're not standing in line trying
8 to get those monies. That's a pretty big
9 deal in everybody's world and every community
10 would be excited about that opportunity. So
11 in that regard we're excited to reinvigorate
12 the technical community work to deliver for
13 Jackson whatever that looks like within these
14 authorities and we look forward to involving
15 all of you in beginning this important
16 process.

17 One thing I wanted to raise in the last
18 few sessions is this meeting kind of came out
19 of nowhere and that we really wanted it to
20 happen in May and it really took a little
21 while to find some meeting halls we could do
22 it in for a variety of reasons, but if we
23 didn't do it this week we had to wait
24 probably another three weeks. This is early
25 engagement for us. This isn't the end of

1 engagement. This is just letting you know
2 what's happening, giving you transparency and
3 as we move through this process we will
4 continue to engage in outreach sessions. So
5 with all that I turn it over to Colonel Klein
6 to walk through some of the details.

7 COLONEL KLEIN: Thank you, ma'am.

8 Ladies and gentlemen, first of all,
9 thank you all for coming this evening and
10 participating in this public process. The
11 first thing I want to do is I want to talk to
12 all the young folks out there, the youth.
13 And I want you all to know that your
14 testimony is important too, so don't be
15 afraid to come up to the microphone and give
16 us your testimony. Just like you, I grew up
17 on a small creek, not unlike Town Creek,
18 okay, and I have good memories of running
19 through the woods, catching frogs, catching
20 fish. I also have memories of when a, you
21 know, a chemical firm up the river dumped
22 chemicals in there and killed all the fish.
23 All right. I've got memories of hurricanes
24 coming through my hometown and flooding my
25 creek. And y'all -- I want to hear your --

1 you young folks testimony too because you are
2 the future of this city and probably the
3 ones -- you may be the ones who may be
4 growing up in it so don't be afraid to come
5 up to the microphone.

6 All right. With that, over the past
7 three sessions we have been receiving a lot
8 of testimony. We've heard about silting
9 problems on the lower Pearl, erosion, the
10 aging infrastructure and its impact on the
11 river. We've heard about concerns over
12 habitat impacts and then even today we heard
13 about how it's really important that we do --
14 you know, we had flood risk management -- a
15 project in place for the City of Jackson,
16 it's going to revitalize sections of the
17 city. It's going to reconnect the community
18 of the river. And so we want to keep hearing
19 your stories, your concerns, and especially
20 hear what the river means to you.

21 So I'm Colonel Chris Klein. I'm the
22 Commander of the Vicksburg Districts. We
23 service nine watersheds in this area, the
24 Pearl River watershed being one of them. And
25 we've put a lot of work in Jackson lately.

1 It's really great to be back in Jackson
2 getting ready to deliver for this city again.

3 So along the Pearl River, it's got a
4 long history of both navigation and flood
5 control, and that story of flood control
6 started in 1968 with the construction of the
7 first levee. You can see that around the
8 boards in the picture form and then we have
9 the flood of record in 1979. And since 1979
10 there have been multiple projects proposed
11 locally as well as by the Corps of Engineers.
12 Multiple proposed solutions, and so this
13 latest locally presented plan prepared in
14 Section 211 of the 1996 Water Resources
15 Development Act, it's been reviewed and it
16 was presented directly to the Secretary under
17 that authorization. And that really brings
18 us to the work that we're doing today. Next
19 slide.

20 Which are our activities. And the
21 latest efforts started at the end of last
22 year at the direction of the Secretary. And
23 our vision is to build off of all previous
24 work, right, and that's all previous work,
25 every -- all previous proposed plans and all

1 the studies that have been done and develop a
2 final report that assesses an array of
3 options for technical feasibility, which
4 includes economic viability and
5 justification, environmental acceptability,
6 and legal compliance. And right now the two
7 most critical items that we're looking for
8 are identifying the National Economic
9 Development Plan, and Brandon will put it in
10 better basic terms than me because he did the
11 last session, but essentially what it means
12 is it is the project that's going to provide
13 the greatest flood risk benefits at the best
14 cost. And so what that means is we need to
15 identify that plan because that becomes the
16 baseline plan off of which all other arrays
17 are then assessed. And every single one of
18 the other arrays must provide at least the
19 amount of flood control that the National
20 Economic Development Plan provides or more.
21 So we're never going to go for a lesser
22 standard than the National Economic
23 Development Plan.

24 And then the last thing we have to do is
25 we must complete all the environmental

1 compliance activities so that this becomes an
2 environmentally and legally compliant project
3 in the end, whichever project that may be.

4 We're also going to do incorporation of
5 this is provide analysis of the comprehensive
6 benefits of each of the arrays. And those
7 comprehensive benefits are both quantitative,
8 so those that you measure either in financial
9 terms, numbers impacted; but also
10 qualitative, and that's where your testimony
11 really comes in is the qualitative impacts of
12 what a proposed project could do in the
13 community, both positively and negatively.
14 So looking forward to those qualitative
15 assessments as well.

16 Last thing before I hand it over to
17 Brandon, I want to just remind everybody the
18 Corps of Engineers, we are neither a
19 proponent or an opponent of any one projects.
20 Our focus is delivering flood risk management
21 solutions to the nation and we're here today
22 to find a flood risk management solution for
23 the City of Jackson. So with that I'm going
24 to turn it over to Mr. Brandon Davis who is
25 going to take us through our tech lines.

1 MR. DAVIS: Well, thank you, sir. I had
2 a great analogy stole from me, but I'll do my
3 best to pull another one off. But, no, it's
4 a Wednesday night, 6:30, you guys are sitting
5 here, that says a lot about you and what this
6 project means to you, and I thank you for
7 that because I live in Vicksburg and we're
8 neighbors, so it's very important to me to be
9 able to help solve this issue that's going on
10 over here in Jackson that's really -- so
11 thank you for being here tonight echoing what
12 the Colonel and Robyn said.

13 My name is Brandon Davis. I am the
14 planning liaison for Colonel Klein in
15 Vicksburg. I also wear the hats quality
16 control and agricultural and environmental
17 economist by trade. And so love being
18 outside, grew up on a farm so I understand
19 what a lot of you are concerned about with
20 this project both for and against, so if I
21 could set the table for you right now, what
22 we're going to do over the next couple of
23 slides that I have is we'll go over an
24 overview of the non-federal interest report
25 that they produced. We're going to look at

1 some of the alternatives that are being
2 evaluated right now. We'll talk about the
3 study area as a whole. One thing that we
4 will go over are areas of interest or topics
5 of interest for you guys. I say all that,
6 that way if I go over something in one of the
7 slides, I may have skipped over it but again,
8 as you provide input, if there's a question
9 you have for me, please feel free to bring
10 that with your input. But thank you for the
11 collaboration. It's very important that we
12 work together towards a solution here.

13 So on this slide here, so the
14 non-federal interest feasibility report was
15 completed under the Section 211 Authority of
16 Water Resource Development Act of 1996.
17 There was a memorandum agreement that was
18 executed July 19 of 2012 between the
19 non-federal interest and the Army Corps of
20 Engineers and it describes the terms of the
21 Section 211 authority. The terms were
22 specific that the 211 feasibility report that
23 the non-federal interest produced would serve
24 as a decision document for the Assistant
25 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, for

1 review and for approval. The alternatives
2 that you can see up there that was proposed
3 in that report was a nonstructural plan, and
4 we'll go into what nonstructural means
5 momentarily in the next slide. There was a
6 levees plan, and then there was a channel
7 improvement plan, which was their preferred
8 plan that included channel improvements,
9 demolition of weir near the Fewell water
10 treatment plant up next -- close to Woodrow
11 Wilson. Construction of the new weir, the
12 low-flow gate structure downstream of the
13 already existing river channel, and federal
14 levee improvements, excavation of material
15 and upgrading the existing non-federal levee
16 into a federalized ring levee around the
17 Savannah Street Wastewater plant down toward
18 the bottom of the reach.

19 I will say that this project that they
20 had proposed was similar to what the Corps
21 has seen in the past in some of the river
22 widening studies that have been done. One
23 particular was in the -- around the San
24 Antonio, Texas area by the Fort Worth
25 district. So we go through all of that to

1 say, you know, we're currently in the process
2 of assessing the environmental acceptability
3 and the technical feasibility of the
4 alternatives that we have. I also want to
5 remind you that when we talk about our
6 alternatives, we are comparing what was
7 already done to what the analysis that we're
8 doing right now. As Robyn and Colonel Klein
9 said, we're going to provide the Secretary
10 the necessary information to choose and
11 implement a plan.

12 Additionally, consistent with Section
13 1176 of WRDA 2018, this draft EIS that we are
14 putting together will assess potential
15 downstream impacts to the Pearl River Basin.
16 There's a lot of wetlands, a lot of areas
17 we've heard a lot of testimony from towns
18 downstream worried about sewage in-flow and
19 things of that nature. So we have been
20 required to look at those impacts and study
21 those as well. Next slide.

22 All right. So the alternatives that are
23 being under consideration right now, again,
24 these are only under consideration. A
25 nonstructural alternative. One, would be

1 relocating structures through buy-outs and
2 relocations. I will say that we had a
3 question earlier about where these buyouts
4 would be. It's really too early to tell.
5 It's just something that's on the table for
6 us to look at. We'll be glad to discuss that
7 with you, but really during the infant stages
8 of trying to determine that if it was to
9 happen.

10 The A1 would be additional nonstructural
11 measures, increasing elevations of
12 structures, residential and commercial, and
13 flood proofing of those structures.
14 Something I want to point out to you guys is
15 that with these nonstructural -- excuse me,
16 the nonstructural alternatives, these
17 alternatives did not have any type of
18 structural features to it, like channel
19 improvement that's being said, it's just a
20 straight nonstructural side.

21 So the alternative C, which is similar
22 to the plan that the non-federal interest has
23 proposed and is their recommended plan, is a
24 channel improvement plan. Like I said, it's
25 similar to other studies that have been done

1 throughout the work. Again, I don't want you
2 to think anything's been picked or chosen,
3 but we have seen these be successful around
4 other parts of the country. We just have to
5 make sure it was something that would work
6 here. This alternative includes excavating
7 and widening the channel, using the material
8 to enhance levees, create islands for
9 environmental habitat, relocation to assist
10 with the Jackson drinking water
11 infrastructure. It's very important that we
12 help maintain the infrastructure of Jackson.
13 We know the concerns that people have about
14 that, so that's one thing that we would look
15 at.

16 Also want to really highlight that we
17 also can have a combination or a hybrid plan
18 of all these various alternatives, or there
19 could be other potential alternatives that
20 are out there. You may provide input tonight
21 to give us ideas, that's the reason you being
22 here is so important to us. But we also
23 received input from some students from the
24 University of California, Berkeley that have
25 plans that we are looking at to see if this

1 would be accessible for trying here. Next
2 slide.

3 So this is the study area, and a while
4 ago I tried to get up and about tripped over
5 my own feet and I'm not going to do that for
6 my embarrassment this time. But there is a
7 map over on the far wall where you can look
8 at the 100 year inundation over there. Yeah,
9 thank you, Tom, there's one over there as
10 well. But what I'd like to highlight to you,
11 if you can see, there is a gray looking area
12 that is adjacent to these river channels and
13 these backwater channels, these various
14 creeks, that is the 100 year inundation
15 study.

16 Now, this project would go all the way
17 down and look at the impacts as we talked
18 about down the Pearl River. But what we want
19 to point out is the 100 year inundation here
20 in this area. You can see that starting up
21 at the Ross Barnett Reservoir, the southeast
22 there and going down, to kind of put it in
23 perspective for you, if I get to the furthest
24 reaches at the bottom back to the east would
25 be Florence, Mississippi. So just south of

1 Florence is where this study area is being
2 located. Next slide.

3 All right. This is an area where it's
4 really important. Your input is going to be
5 vital for us here in areas of interest.
6 These are some of the main areas of interest
7 or topics that we look at for our analysis,
8 but we welcome your input. And some of the
9 things we want to look at is flood risk
10 reduction, water supply, water and wastewater
11 treatment, ecosystem/environmental impacts,
12 existing waste sites in this area, cultural
13 resources. There's a lot of culturally
14 sensitive areas. We want to make sure we are
15 doing our due diligence with Section 106.

16 The transportation, how does this impact
17 the transportation? What is the "So what?"
18 of impacting our interstates and local
19 highways and local ways through here.

20 Downstream impacts, we talked about
21 that. It's very important that we look at
22 the impacts this could have on the wetlands
23 downstream, do our best and try to determine
24 what we would need to do to prevent that or
25 minimize that.

1 Recreational access and opportunities.
2 One thing we heard a lot in the previous
3 sessions is there was a lack of ways to get
4 down to the Pearl River for recreational
5 opportunities. So we'd like to hear that.

6 And then also community impacts, the
7 cohesion, the quality of life. Some of the
8 things you don't think about with flooding is
9 how does this impact mental health, something
10 we don't talk a lot about. But you think of
11 the anxiety that someone has it, their house
12 is flooded. Is it going to happen again? We
13 want to hear that.

14 And then also the economic
15 opportunities. And then the potential
16 others.

17 Now, we've listed a lot up here, but
18 there may be some nuances to what we have
19 that we haven't thought about. So we'd love
20 to hear from you on that. And then anything
21 that we've missed.

22 So I think that's all that I have. I'm
23 going to yield the mic back to the Colonel.
24 But, again, thank you all for being here and
25 we look forward to hearing from you.

1 COLONEL KLEIN: Ladies and gentlemen,
2 that brings us to the timeline where we're at
3 today. And today the technical team's work
4 is continuing. That's why you're about --
5 your input at this point is very valuable.
6 We're here to receive that feedback and
7 incorporate that into the assessment and
8 final report that we're doing. We'll have a
9 draft report completed at the end of August
10 that will also go out for review, public
11 review, and that will then inform our final
12 report, which will go in December to the
13 Secretary and the Secretary intends to make
14 his decision in January timeframe. This is a
15 very streamlined timeline, seems bad math,
16 but it is feasible. It's feasible because
17 we're building on years and years of work.
18 So thank you again for coming out this time,
19 the next step in the process, and we look
20 forward to hearing your feedback. I turn it
21 over to Tom.

22 MR. THOMAS SHAW: All right. Thank you,
23 sir.

24 So that's the first part of this
25 meeting, and that's the informational part

1 for you. Now, as we mentioned before, we
2 need to collect your input and your feedback.
3 It's very vital to us. And so before we do
4 that, I would mention a couple of things.
5 One, is we're accepting comments through the
6 end of June, and so we truly want your
7 feedback. As I mentioned earlier, there's
8 multiple ways to do it. There's an e-mail
9 address that you can send e-mails to.
10 There's, of course, regular old normal postal
11 service that's there. And then there's a
12 project website so that you can keep up with
13 what's going on. And as progress is made for
14 this -- providing information to the ASA, we
15 will be updating the slide deck. I mentioned
16 earlier, there are comment cards over there
17 too. So we really appreciate you giving us
18 some input and some feedback there.

19 So recall when I first started I talked
20 about some rules of engagement. We've got
21 two microphones here, and basically what
22 we'll do is if you have comments, input you'd
23 like to provide, we would like you to step to
24 the podium. Please wait until I recognize
25 you so that we can do it in a coordinated

1 manner and try to limit your statements to
2 three minutes. I will sit. When you start
3 getting close to your time I will stand back
4 up and the idea being that you then come to
5 the conclusion on your statement would be
6 great. With that, I think we're ready to go.

7 So if you will, there's two microphones.

8 COLONEL KLEIN: Thanks, Tom. And when
9 you were coming in and saw the tri-folds,
10 there are QR codes because we're high tech
11 like that. All right. So there is a QR
12 code, scan that QR code and it will take you
13 to the website.

14 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Thank you, sir. Yes,
15 ma'am.

16 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Well, good evening.
17 I am Zakita Summers. I serve as state
18 representative for House 68, which covers
19 West Jackson and Hinds County and Pearl and
20 Richland in Rankin County. I don't know that
21 I am a young person, Colonel, but I do have a
22 young person that's coming to the Corps of
23 Engineers in Rock Island. He just graduated
24 from the University of Iowa, so I'm excited
25 about that. I would --

1 ROBYN COLOSIMO: It's one of my favorite
2 districts.

3 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Good, very good.

4 ROBYN COLOSIMO: It's right next to
5 Vicksburg.

6 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Oh, I'm glad you
7 said that.

8 (Unintelligible discussion.)

9 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: I lived most of my
10 life in West Jackson and there is a glaring
11 environmental justice issue that affects this
12 side of the Pearl River. When heavy rains
13 hit the area we can almost guarantee that
14 communities in West Jackson will experience
15 flooding, severe flooding. That's because
16 the levee does not protect these communities
17 in our district who are hit hardest as a
18 result. Not only does the current levee
19 system leave large parts of Jackson adjacent
20 to the Pearl River unprotected from flood,
21 but the Corps 1960s levees design has
22 adversely impacted minority areas in the City
23 of Jackson. There's a choke point in the
24 current levee system that actually increases
25 flood levels. And neighborhoods in that area

1 experience more flood impacts as a result of
2 the current levee system. This has been a
3 historical problem for the black community
4 for many years. I'm talking Duterville,
5 Battlefield Park, Washington Addition,
6 (unintelligible) Circle, Westland Plaza
7 subdivision, Pecan Tree neighborhood, Jane
8 Avenue neighborhood, and all of the areas in
9 between. Several of those residents from
10 those communities are actually here today.

11 After the severity of the 2020 flood
12 many of you mentioned already, my colleagues
13 in the legislature and I helped two
14 communities to gather data from the neighbors
15 about those impacts. We heard story after
16 story of homeowners, pastors, and other
17 concerned citizens about how they were up to
18 here with the lack of infrastructure and
19 maintenance. They wanted answers and they
20 wanted them right now, and they want them
21 even today. They told us how high the water
22 got, how they were scared, how they felt like
23 prisoners in their own homes. They cannot
24 afford to move, and insurance premiums
25 increased after every claim.

1 In addition, motorists could not travel
2 the streets or under viaducts. Our scholars
3 could not attend school. And electives, we
4 were doing the very best that we could to
5 scout sandbags to take to our vulnerable
6 members like the elderly, and make sure that
7 they had bottled water.

8 Of course, the flooding impacts water
9 insecurity, economic development and public
10 health. I believe the locally proposed
11 flood -- proposed flood control plan solves
12 these problems by mitigating those impacts
13 and correcting the design flaw. The plan
14 provides protection for minority
15 neighborhoods that hasn't been protected for
16 decades. All citizens of Jackson need safe
17 water and flood protection so that no one is
18 faced with a traumatic decision of staying or
19 going.

20 I would also like to read a statement
21 from Ted Henefin, who is our federally
22 appointed third party Jackson Water System
23 administrator, and he states that the ITPM
24 supports the channel improvements plan
25 because it preserves the broadest options for

1 Jackson's long term drinking water needs.
2 With a new weir, a new water intake structure
3 could be located anywhere along the river
4 from the current location downstream to the
5 new weir. Having more options will allow
6 optimization of valuable plants to provide a
7 significant community benefit, elimination of
8 flood risk and flooded facilities and the
9 best hydraulic location for pumping water
10 throughout the system without limitations
11 created by the location of the existing weir.
12 So currently it protects Rankin County.

13 We believe that the proposed project
14 provides relief, protection, opportunity, and
15 extends benefits to minority and low income
16 households in Jackson. It's a win-win for
17 district 68 and stand in support of it. We
18 thank the Corps and the Biden Administration
19 for all of their efforts to help the City of
20 Jackson, and we look forward to progress.
21 Thank you so much.

22 COLONEL KLEIN: Representative Summers,
23 thank you for your testimony there. EJ is
24 something very important we're looking at.
25 It's one of the initiatives that we've been

1 directed to look at. And I don't know what
2 your availability is, what timeline you're
3 on, but we have a good idea of those areas.
4 But if you could, I would appreciate it if
5 you could show me on maps of the areas that
6 are of interest to you. We can make sure
7 that we capture that and don't miss it.

8 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Absolutely.

9 COLONEL KLEIN: All right. Thank you.
10 Get with me after. Thank you.

11 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Sir.

12 RICHARD THIGPEN: Thank you. Good
13 afternoon. My name is Richard Thigpen, and I
14 am an officer and President and CEO of
15 Jackson Official Destination Marketing
16 Organization. We are the tourism arm for
17 Jackson. Jackson's economy is benefited by a
18 strong tourist environment. A lot of people
19 don't understand that. I can give you some
20 examples. Last year we hit 67 million
21 dollars in tourism business. Generated 115
22 million dollars in economic output. 48,000
23 Jacksonians have benefited from tourism
24 community. In fact, tourism is Mississippi's
25 fourth largest employer in the state.

1 Jackson tourism generated 19.4 million in tax
2 revenue, which impacted each Jacksonian's
3 household by about \$313 on an annual basis.
4 That should offset those property taxes by
5 2.8 million dollars. Tourism is big business
6 for Jackson. Tourism is big business for the
7 state of Mississippi.

8 A dependable water system that
9 eliminates flooding will help attract tourism
10 assets, developers, including hotels,
11 restaurants, historical and cultural
12 attractions, and similar events. All these
13 will help enhance the economy. Those 48,000
14 Jacksonians that benefited in the tourism
15 industry are low to middle income citizens.

16 If you think about how the impact of
17 what happened with our flooding and our
18 water, how that negative impacts my positive
19 marketing investments that go across the
20 United States and across the world and how
21 well could it come back, what one of the
22 marketing assets we have are resilient people
23 that -- the restaurant tourists that know how
24 to deal with boil water notices, but when we
25 have that water issues compounded with

1 flooding, it just drastically impacted our
2 ability to be a strong economic contributor
3 for not only the City, not only the state,
4 because we have a special story, yet it can
5 happen in Jackson, Mississippi. It can
6 happen in Mississippi. Just think about the
7 things that happen so negatively in the Civil
8 Rights movement in Mississippi, in Jackson.
9 We are the cradle of the Civil Rights
10 movement because of the things that we were
11 able to do in Jackson, because of the things
12 we were able to do in Mississippi, including
13 changing our flag just a couple of years ago.
14 We are a model for this country. We are the
15 conscience for this country. If it can
16 happen in Jackson, if it can happen in the
17 state of Mississippi, we can continue to
18 impact positively this nation and the world.
19 Thank you.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've got a couple
21 of questions. My first question is all the
22 money that would be used in the project, to
23 complete the project, is it all federal
24 money?

25 COLONEL KLEIN: So a portion of it will

1 be federal money. Again, we haven't
2 determined exactly what the project is.
3 Determining what the NED plan is, you know,
4 the experts don't want to get it wrong, the
5 NED plan sets what the federal government
6 will pay for the project, essentially. And
7 the NAV becomes, like, kind of a cost share
8 discussion as to how the final cost will be
9 broken out.

10 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Yeah, that's all true,
11 but simply stated there's 220 million that
12 were allocated by the Bipartisan
13 Infrastructure Law for a project we haven't
14 determined yet. Once we determine that we
15 will apply the law of cost sharing. So how
16 much of that cost sharing depends on the
17 benefits produced for flood risk management.
18 That's the simplest way to say that. It will
19 require a non-federal sponsor.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My second
21 question is will private landowners be
22 required to contribute to the cost of the
23 project in any way whatsoever and that
24 includes increased real estate taxes?

25 ROBYN COLOSIMO: I can't answer that

1 question. I think that question is probably
2 more for who the sponsor is and how they pay
3 their share. We have, the federal
4 government, will not be excising any tax of
5 any sort.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So there's money
7 coming in from sponsors other than you all
8 that's to help finance the project?

9 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So that has not been
10 decided. Let me give you an example how it
11 works nationwide anywhere we are. So if we
12 have a flood control project or any kind of
13 project the Corps builds, federal law
14 dictates how much a non-federal sponsor has
15 to cost share. That non-federal interest is
16 typically a public entity, meaning a state or
17 local government, and they determine how to
18 use their money, so it's either in their
19 capital budget or other means to pay for
20 those funds. That's part of their public
21 process, so I can't provide visibility on
22 that. I think that's part of the discussion.
23 Who would the sponsor be for the project that
24 gets recommended and how are they financing
25 that. That's definitely the visibility you

1 want through this process.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And, of course,
3 I'd like to address the elderly and homeless
4 not on top of the list and that's on my mind.
5 What process do you have in place to make
6 sure that the balanced plan for eminent
7 domain and that there's only reasonable and
8 necessary taking of private property as well
9 as some government oversight in the process?

10 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So I'm going to ask
11 another question. Are you worried about a
12 particular type of eminent domain, like
13 individual houses?

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. Taking of
15 private property. Taking of land.

16 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Okay. I'm going to let
17 the Colonel talk about the real estate
18 process.

19 COLONEL KLEIN: I can guide you, sir, on
20 the actual real estate process, but I tell
21 you, eminent domain is not step 1 ever. So
22 we would be working really closely with the
23 non-federal sponsor for acquisition of land.
24 Federal law governs how that process works,
25 and it is a long drawn process, but we think

1 we can link you and the right folks to answer
2 questions on that.

3 ROBYN COLOSIMO: And then just one
4 follow up on that. So we talked about
5 nonstructural potential buyouts, there was a
6 question about this at the end of last
7 session. In terms of any buyouts that we're
8 able to somehow offer, it would be voluntary
9 only. We would never do eminent domain to
10 have people moved off their property. My
11 boss is a Native American and he feels
12 particularly strong about that point when it
13 comes to relocating communities, right, so I
14 have to be honest there, but when it comes to
15 the line, the line for levees, there's a lot
16 more to that and we can make that connection
17 happen, but eminent domain is not going to be
18 a proposition.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But African
20 Americans know something about that, also.

21 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Of course, that's why I
22 mentioned it.

23 MS. TAMEKA JENKINS: Good evening. My
24 name is Tameka Jenkins. I am the Executive
25 Director for Economic Development here in

1 Hinds County. I came to Hinds County last
2 June, and I came just in time to see the
3 impact of flooding in this area. It's way
4 past time for this project to come to action,
5 so residents don't have to worry about water
6 in their homes or in their businesses, and
7 businesses don't have interruptions when they
8 are supporting the economy here in Hinds
9 County.

10 I have three quick points I want to make
11 to explain my perspective of why the Economic
12 Development Organization in Hinds County is
13 in support of this flood control project.

14 The first one is attraction and
15 retention. Before a company comes and wants
16 to expand to Hinds County they're looking at
17 us on the news. They're doing their research
18 online, and they're pretty much doing their
19 thing before I ever even get a phone call or
20 an e-mail. And if we have national news
21 about how this area is flooding, companies
22 are not going to want to come here.

23 And as far as the retention aspect, this
24 kind of goes with my point number 2, the
25 water. So last fall, when the area flooded,

1 it did interrupt the water process. We have
2 three major industries in Hinds County that
3 depend on water to cool the machines during
4 their processes. So if we don't have water,
5 those machines aren't cool, those companies
6 are losing money. And we're talking about
7 millions of dollars per second if, you know,
8 that machine doesn't catch that cooling
9 process to, you know, make their product. So
10 we have three companies like that, and one
11 company that I visited recently literally
12 told me they lost, I think, 5 million dollars
13 in, like, two minutes because the water went
14 out and they weren't prepared. They do not
15 have a well. They're dependent on the
16 Jackson water system. So it's very important
17 for the retention of companies. And, you
18 know, you'd be surprised on how water affects
19 the industries here in this area.

20 My last point is quality of life
21 possibilities. So last year on the
22 International Economic Development Council,
23 which I'm a part of the board, we had our
24 conference in Oklahoma City. I don't know if
25 anybody knows this, but in Oklahoma City they

1 literally rerouted a river, and they also
2 changed an interstate. Now, our river is
3 right here in one location. I'm sure we can
4 get some funding and get the community on one
5 page to fix this flooding project. If they
6 can reroute an interstate and a river, surely
7 we can do something to control this flooding.
8 And now that they've done that, they have a
9 beautiful residential and commercial
10 development along a -- kind of on the river
11 in downtown Oklahoma City. You can take the
12 bus there. You can spend all day there just
13 chilling out.

14 Also, we have Memphis, which is one of
15 the bigger -- the Mississippi River. They
16 have a walk that, you know, lays below the
17 floodplain. But, you know, there are
18 opportunities that, you know, we can do to
19 mitigate this risk. And the Economic
20 Development Organization is 100 percent in
21 support of this project and whatever you can
22 do to help within the law. Thank you.

23 COLONEL KLEIN: Give me one second, Tom.
24 Thank you for the example of Oklahoma City.
25 For others that are interested, about two

1 weeks ago, I was up in Fargo, North Dakota,
2 and there's a project, Fargo to Morehead
3 Diversion project where they're diverting the
4 Red River of the north. And it's a
5 phenomenal story of how the community came --
6 a flooding community came together in order
7 to make a project like that happen. So,
8 ma'am, thank you for your testimony. If you
9 want to read that I'm sure you can Google the
10 Fargo-Morehead Flood Risk Management Project.

11 CJ ROSE: Good evening. I am CJ Rose,
12 resident of Jackson and Hinds County,
13 Mississippi, also pastor of Mt. Helen Baptist
14 Church, which is a church in downtown
15 Jackson's historic -- Farish Street Historic
16 District. I'm also plugged into the
17 Vicksburg area as Interim Director of the
18 Myrlie Evers-Williams Honors Program at
19 Alcorn State University. We help to train
20 students in environmental justice and civil
21 rights advocacy. The past few years have
22 amplified and exasperated Jackson's water
23 insecurity, flooding, economic development
24 issues.

25 Back in 2020, though, my northeast

1 Jackson home wasn't affected during the
2 flood. Just about a mile down the road, many
3 of my friends and church members were
4 flooded, and of course, several other
5 residents and businesses were flooded
6 downtown in the areas near I-55 and I-20
7 stack.

8 I believe that the proposed flood
9 control plan helps to resolve all three of
10 these issues. One, this particular plan, as
11 I noted earlier, impacts and helps to protect
12 largely black and economically disadvantaged
13 neighborhoods in Jackson in those flood
14 areas. Flooding in those areas, especially
15 tough on citizens who can't afford to
16 relocate from flood risk areas. Living in
17 Northeast Jackson there are those who are
18 inconvenienced by flooding and relocate out
19 of Jackson, but when you have very, very
20 limited income it is hard to do that.

21 As a pastor, our church has provided
22 pastoral care, charitable aid, and short term
23 relief to flood victims displaced in those
24 times. Of course, with all our water
25 security issues have impacted members and

1 nonmembers alike that we service. Really
2 since the 1980s, but in higher speeds since
3 about 20 years ago, Jackson suffered from
4 years of investment and population decline,
5 making imaginative and urgent changes
6 necessary not only to this whole issue of
7 flooding and water security, but what kind of
8 city we want, what kind of county we want to
9 attract and retain citizens. And
10 particularly as a millennial, I may not be as
11 young as the person you were speaking to,
12 Colonel, but I am 41 and relatively young
13 still, many of us look to places like Memphis
14 and other places that have a lot of other
15 recreational opportunities. Young people,
16 young families, particularly young people who
17 attend our local colleges and universities we
18 want to keep in Jackson, keep in Hinds
19 County, prefer more opportunities for
20 recreation and we think this would afford
21 them this as well. Thank you so much.

22 MS. LEANN CAMPBELL: Good evening. My
23 name is Leanne Campbell. I'm here tonight
24 representing Mississippi for a Great New
25 Deal. We are in alliance with over 40

1 grassroots organizations across Mississippi,
2 including groups of front line working class
3 folks in Jackson who are impacted by
4 environmental justice issues including Pearl
5 River flooding and they are concerned for
6 themselves, their families, their communities
7 and their wellbeing. So I'm here tonight to
8 represent those concerns, and in particular
9 concerns around the proposed One Lake Project
10 Alternative.

11 Based on our research and our engagement
12 in this process, we are deeply opposed to the
13 One Lake Project Alternative. One Lake is a
14 private real estate development scheme
15 masquerading as a flood control project that
16 will only put more people and property in
17 harm's way. The Army Corps rejected One Lake
18 years ago and should reject it today. One
19 Lake construction will expose local
20 communities to toxic contamination by
21 disturbing eight dangerous waste sites and
22 further exacerbating the City's water crisis.
23 There is no plan to protect the public health
24 with only 8 million dollars set aside for
25 clean up.

1 Jackson residents already face toxic
2 lead levels in the water system. And we all
3 know the current water treatment system is
4 fragile. The JH Fewell Water Treatment
5 Plant, which supplies 30 percent of City of
6 Jackson's drinking water and operated during
7 the recent water crises, would not be able to
8 operate during construction on One Lake
9 because of dredging induced water quality
10 problems, forcing Jackson to somehow find and
11 pay for another temporary water supply for
12 over three years.

13 Jackson's residents deserve a solution
14 that will not further threaten their access
15 to clean drinking water.

16 One Lake will not alleviate the rain
17 induced flash flooding that already impacts
18 neighborhoods along the Pearl River and main
19 tributaries that flow through Jackson, but
20 instead will make flash flooding worse by
21 permanently elevating parts of these creeks
22 and creating new backflooding problems in
23 other areas. We've been canvassing in the
24 Eubanks, Town, and Lynch Creek neighborhoods
25 to hear residents concerns. These are low

1 income, working class folks who can't afford
2 increases in insurance, can't afford threats
3 to access to their roads and transportation,
4 and cannot afford the neighborhood
5 infrastructure threats that the One Lake
6 Project would propose.

7 Finally, One Lake will likely raise
8 Mississippians property taxes. Passed in
9 2017 State Legislative Session House Bill
10 1585 gives the local levee board a blank
11 check to raise property taxes for owners they
12 determine are "directly or indirectly"
13 benefited by the project.

14 Working people and businesses in Jackson
15 should not foot the bill for a flood control
16 project. Instead of a disruptive One Lake
17 Project, Jackson residents and businesses
18 deserve effective, sustainable flood relief
19 solutions that benefit all people, not just
20 those who stand to gain financially from the
21 One Lake Project. The Corps should
22 prioritize the more effective, less costly
23 options that truly address flooding concerns,
24 include improvements to existing levees,
25 elevating homes and buildings, or offering

1 voluntary buyouts for properties with a
2 history of flooding problems. Thank you.

3 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Thanks for your
4 comments. A couple of things I just want to
5 clarify. This came up in the last session as
6 well. In no uncertain terms, the Corps of
7 Engineers would never construct a project
8 that would enable a water treatment plant to
9 shut down. That's just simply a fact. There
10 may be some concerns about turbidity that we
11 have to include that analysis. Obviously,
12 appreciate that fact, but in no case did that
13 happen.

14 More further important things to amplify
15 that I might have said later or earlier. In
16 terms of plans, we haven't made a decision.
17 We've asked the Corps, we the Secretary's
18 office, asked the Corps to do an analysis,
19 not make a recommendation, but do a very
20 specific analysis of the alternatives, the
21 benefits, the costs, the pros, the cons, all
22 those things that are involved but stop short
23 of making that decision. That includes no
24 action. We can just remain status quo. It
25 could also include this "combination

1 thereof". There's a lot of good ideas out
2 there.

3 In fact, one of the reasons Alt A and A1
4 came about as a nonstructural plan actually
5 builds on a lot of things we've heard from
6 people over the years, and so we're looking
7 to build these out. All those things are on
8 the table. Just want you to have confidence
9 when the decision has been made. We're
10 here -- what you say is important to us to
11 help think about those formulations, and
12 ultimately bring something forward. No more
13 diplomacy, give us your good ideas. Thank
14 you.

15 MR. RICHARDSON: My name is
16 (unintelligible) Richardson and I'm a Jackson
17 native. And as matter of fact, I live right
18 across the street overlooking Mayes Lake. I
19 know how these areas flood. I remember the
20 '79 flood. We probably wouldn't have been
21 able to meet in the '79 flood right where we
22 are now from the creek behind us. That's one
23 of the creeks that's going to be directly
24 affected by this.

25 And I'm going to keep this kind of

1 personal. We dealt with the river side. I'm
2 a long time employee of Eaton Aerospace. I'm
3 a retired citizen. This is my retirement
4 home. We are right next to the most affected
5 area. This hits me very personally.

6 As I said, I know exactly where these
7 streets are going to flood and do flash
8 floods. There's a storm drain right behind
9 the gas station up here running along
10 Lakeland Drive, which also flash floods. You
11 know, when they raise the river level by
12 eight feet, where's that water going to go,
13 it's going to come back into Jackson. It's
14 going to ruin Mayes Lake. I walk in that
15 park almost every day. We've got hostile
16 legislature and government, not everybody, of
17 course. For example, the Governor vetoed the
18 golf course improvements. The museum trail,
19 I could have walked here via a pedestrian
20 bridge bridge if they hadn't rejected that
21 money. I was looking forward to retiring
22 next to a golf course, they rejected that
23 money. They don't care about Jackson. As
24 they said, it was a real estate project
25 disguised as a flood control project. They

1 don't care about Jackson. Mayes Lake is
2 going to turn into a stinking turtle pond.
3 When you change the Pearl River ecosystem to
4 a lake ecosystem you're going to have Asian
5 carp and gar, it's not going to be a
6 recreational area unless you like to catch
7 carp and gar. Nobody is going to want to go
8 to an island and fish the water. It's not
9 going to be a magic solution that they say it
10 is. It's a development project. State
11 Street Group is pushing it because presumably
12 they want to buy what is currently wetlands
13 and build on them. It's just -- it's
14 heartbreaking to see what they are doing to
15 our city, and the Governor in particular is
16 totally hostile to Jackson. Do not think
17 this is the magic solution that they say it
18 is. It's a development project.

19 DR. ELAINE JACKSON: Thank you so much.
20 I am Dr. Elaine Anthony, acting president of
21 Jackson State University, which is located
22 right in the heart of the City of Jackson.
23 Jackson State is a key economic contributor
24 to our city and it is a pillar of the
25 community.

1 During the flooding and the water
2 crisis, it affected our students a great
3 deal. We found out, as we already knew, that
4 water was very, very vital. We had to do
5 certain things like in terms of scholarships
6 and in terms of classes. We had to go
7 virtual in several instances and it
8 definitely affected our students. Many
9 students had to leave campus and go home
10 during that crisis. We need safe and
11 reliable water and a resilient city that
12 doesn't flood. We also need a revitalized
13 community with economic opportunities so that
14 our graduates, our students, will want to
15 stay in the Jackson area and in the state of
16 Mississippi. We don't want a brain drain
17 because of this. We need a comprehensive
18 project that solves flooding and the water
19 supply and economic opportunity for our
20 students. It is vital that we look seriously
21 at this project because the future of our
22 city and of our state depends upon it. Thank
23 you very much.

24 MR. SHANDA YATES: Thank you. I'm
25 Shanda Yates. I'm a representative. I

1 represent District 64, which is primarily
2 Northeast Jackson, parts of Reservoir,
3 Ridgeland, and Madison. And I'm here to be
4 very brief, you've heard a lot of what I
5 would have already said, so I'll just
6 reiterate a few key points.

7 I represent many of the neighborhoods in
8 Northeast Jackson that are most at risk for
9 flooding. A lot of those off of Old Canton
10 Road. The current levee system does not
11 protect those neighborhoods in Northeast
12 Jackson. In fact, it actually makes the
13 flooding worse for those neighborhoods
14 because of those choke points that were
15 mentioned downstream. Those neighborhoods
16 are full of working families who either
17 cannot afford to move because of flooding or
18 should not have to move because of flooding.
19 That should not have to be a choice that they
20 have to make, to give up their home that
21 they've paid for, they may have lived in
22 their entire lives because of continued
23 flooding. They don't have the resources to
24 do that. Again, nor should they have to.

25 There have been two floods in the last

1 three years, which is unacceptable. We have
2 been talking about flood control measures and
3 possibilities for as long as I've been alive,
4 so more than 40 years at this point. I live
5 in Jackson. I have an eight year old son who
6 lives in Jackson, obviously with me, and we
7 plan to stay in Jackson, but having
8 neighborhoods and having businesses that do
9 not flood is a large part of that.

10 And again, having a project that would
11 also prioritize economic development and
12 things like that is a huge part of brain
13 drain that was just mentioned a moment ago.
14 There are neighborhoods in states immediately
15 surrounding us, communities and neighborhoods
16 immediately surrounding us with riverfronts,
17 businesses, districts, and you see young
18 people flocking to those areas. Jackson has
19 nothing like that. Mississippi has nothing
20 like that by and large. If we can have a
21 comprehensive flood control project that not
22 only takes care of the flooding, but also
23 offers opportunities like that for young
24 people and gives incentives for those people
25 to stay in the City, to stay in Jackson, that

1 is most certainly an added bonus.

2 I would also like to mention, again,
3 that Ted Henefin has supported the project.
4 He is the federally appointed third party
5 administrator for the water sewer system.

6 If you live in the United States you've
7 heard about Jackson and its many problems in
8 the last year or so. This is a problem that
9 there is a solution for, a readily available
10 solution. Not all the problems that you have
11 heard about related to Jackson have a
12 solution that is readily available at our
13 fingertips. Residents see this problem, but
14 they also see a solution and they are ready
15 for action. And I would urge the Corps to
16 start the action as soon as possible.

17 MS. SUSAN GARRARD: I'm Susan Garrard,
18 and in my professional life I lead the
19 state's largest cultural institution for
20 children, the Mississippi Children's Museum
21 with its flagship canvas across the street on
22 the bluff looking over -- at LeFleur's Bluff.

23 And I also serve as a founding member of the
24 Great City Mississippi Foundation. Thank you
25 for your work and consideration of our

1 community's input.

2 I'm a strong supporter of the local plan
3 for many reasons, and primarily many that
4 have already been stated. It's a
5 comprehensive solution that addresses the
6 potential to reduce flooding, provide an
7 opportunity to ensure safe and clean water
8 supply, provide needed outdoor education and
9 recreation opportunities, and very
10 importantly, to allow economic growth for
11 generations of children and families in our
12 state's capital.

13 The Mississippi Children's Museum serves
14 over 200,000 children annually here in
15 Jackson and has award winning programs
16 serving children all over our city and state,
17 including an onsite after school program with
18 children from five different schools in the
19 Jackson Public School System. We can see
20 daily some of the social emotional anxiety
21 that comes during these major flood events.
22 We watch as the river rises and the children
23 watch Eubanks when it begins to flood Museum
24 Boulevard. And many of these children are in
25 neighborhoods and schools that begin to see

1 this. We think that -- we would love for
2 children to know about the river in a more
3 captive way and they have little access to
4 play or to have water recreation in our city.

5 We can have a new vision for our river
6 and for our city. I can see the river as a
7 place to educate, provide outdoor
8 opportunities. I can see improved parks,
9 beautiful greenway trails that not only
10 connect us to the river, but to each other.
11 Access to water recreational resources and
12 reduce the possibility of flooding, reduce
13 polluted streams and tributaries. The local
14 plan can be transformational for Jackson. It
15 can make a future water plant possible. It
16 could address repeated flooding. We can
17 build and create a healthier community and we
18 can provide more certain and optimistic
19 economic future for our children if we have a
20 plan of resiliency and restoration to create
21 a more prosperous and beautiful city that our
22 children can be proud of. Thank you.

23 MR. JOE LAUDERDALE: Good afternoon.
24 Thanks for putting together this hearing. I
25 think I've been to, probably over the last 28

1 years, probably six or eight of these in
2 Jackson. I'm Joe Lauderdale. I live in
3 Jackson, northeast Jackson, own a business in
4 downtown Jackson on South Farish Street, been
5 there about 40 years, just staying and making
6 it work. A lot of great associates there
7 that live in Jackson and they're wonderful
8 people.

9 Whenever the -- and my property is next
10 to Town Creek and in the last two and a half
11 years we have to kind of stop work and move
12 our equipment, our machines out, you know, I
13 rented an 18-wheeler, you know, covered vans
14 and put supplies in them that can't get wet
15 in anticipation of the flooding. Lately the
16 Pearl River Water Supply District has done a
17 great job on what managing they can of the
18 Reservoir outflow. I'm really proud of them.

19 A lot of people have put a lot of time
20 and money into this project to do something
21 about flooding. It's been studied more than
22 any project I've ever been around. I'm a
23 licensed professional engineer. I worked
24 with a consulting engineering firm for ten
25 years, and it flooded on Lakeland Drive in

1 1979, so I waded in there moving our
2 engineering drawings up, you know, all
3 through the night while flood waters rose, so
4 it's really, really -- it was really scary,
5 really scary, but there's a solution. We
6 know there's a solution to this.

7 To the people that are totally against
8 it, there's nothing that we can do, we've
9 addressed everything in the world to try to
10 calm your feelings, but for some people, you
11 can explain everything until the end of the
12 earth and they'll still not agree to it. So
13 I hope some people realize that we need to do
14 this project, get it -- get it done. It's
15 under a deadline, which I know that it can be
16 done. I used to do a lot of design work, I'm
17 very familiar -- I did a lot of design work
18 for the Corps of Engineers back in the '70s,
19 so I'm real familiar with the process and I
20 know this process, I know you have to follow
21 it, but I think we just need to do this.
22 It'll help with our water supply. It'll help
23 with flooding. It'll help us with
24 development, which we badly need here to keep
25 our young people in our city and the area.

1 I've got two kids. They each have two
2 children and married, and they love the area.
3 I don't want to see it go down. I want to
4 build it up. And I know there are a lot of
5 people that feel the same way I do. We've
6 got a great city with a lot of potential and
7 we can make it -- we can get it back like
8 that, but we just need some help. My company
9 is -- I'm staying in Jackson. I thought
10 about leaving, but I'm not going to do it
11 because I know there's a solution in sight,
12 and I think we're about to break and do
13 something to help our city, both economically
14 and, you know, in a healthy safe atmosphere.

15 So thank you very much for y'all's time
16 and everybody here. Thanks for the help. I
17 always love to hear from the environmental
18 people too, thank y'all. Hope y'all have a
19 good evening. Thank you.

20 MS. JESSICA RUSSELL: My name is Jessica
21 Russell and I live in the Belhaven
22 neighborhood in Jackson, so the Pearl River
23 is about a five minute walk on foot from my
24 house. I'm here because I love Jackson and I
25 love the river, and I know that our town

1 deserves a river that works with our
2 community, works for our community and not
3 something that is a problem or an issue.

4 I know that when we talk about the river
5 we can't not talk about the community, and
6 we're here as a community. Our answers, I
7 believe, are in the community and I thank you
8 for hearing from the community.

9 I know that you are exploring options
10 and that you haven't chosen an option, so I
11 just wanted to represent some viewpoints to
12 consider, actually explore different options.
13 It's really fun and exciting to think about
14 tourism and the economy and all the things
15 that development can possibly bring, but I
16 also think it's important to remember that a
17 healthy economy depends on a healthy
18 environment and any decision made that does
19 not consider the environment and its
20 foundation, especially in a city that has
21 been -- well, everyone knows that cities with
22 high minority populations and environmental
23 justice are -- we don't have a good track
24 record there, so this is an important thing
25 for us in Jackson, healthy environment. We

1 do want to help the economy and we deserve
2 that. But first things first, I think we
3 have to do right by our people and by their
4 health and by the flooding of their homes,
5 and we have to do right by our nature and our
6 environment. And so I just think that that's
7 a really important thing to consider that you
8 are able to show in the plan that's chosen
9 the ways in which that was considered.

10 Also, I have a question, and I would
11 also like to just do a quick comment about
12 the vision. I think it's really important
13 for people in the community to talk about the
14 visions that they have.

15 And when it comes to flood control, I
16 just want to say that I envision a future in
17 a town where people aren't afraid every time
18 it rains, but also that we're able to walk
19 from our homes to the river or drive to the
20 river and have access to a healthy, clean
21 river that looks like a river, that behaves
22 like a river, that has healthy landscape
23 beside it, supporting healthy environment.
24 And not around -- and maybe not so much
25 having condos and shops, but maybe a beach

1 that maybe parents and wilderness and those
2 things that are so important that are proven
3 to -- talk about social and emotional
4 anxiety, access to nature is proven to
5 relieve that and people in Jackson don't have
6 enough of those experiences, but we could and
7 they're right here and they can be free. And
8 you don't have to spend money as a person to
9 go be in the woods, and you want to be in the
10 woods where it's nice and safe, so all that.

11 I do have a question. It seems like --
12 and I'm really excited to ask this. We
13 aren't able to address the Army Corps of
14 Engineer people very often. But it seems
15 there's an emphasis in a lot of communities
16 on undoing restrictions to rivers. How do
17 you approach considering whether or not to
18 add additional water restrictions?

19 COLONEL KLEIN: That's a really good
20 question. So, you know, through our plan
21 formulators, there's a multi step process,
22 taking in the considerations that Brandon
23 went through earlier. That includes weighing
24 in how we remove structures as well, right.
25 So we talked about how do you get things out

1 of the river that were put in the river that
2 are now causing adverse effects like erosion,
3 siltation, things that we talked about,
4 specifically we heard about in the lower
5 Pearl, right. So that requires another
6 study. We're studying the things that we
7 studied that we've already put in, because
8 what happens, you know, as you're aware, is
9 you put in these structures and now you've
10 already changed the ecosystem, right. And so
11 new habitat has created because of those
12 features. And so now we've got -- before we
13 just go in and, you know, move those things
14 out, we've just got to study it, determine
15 what the benefit is, make sure that we're not
16 destroying, you know, potentially a habitat
17 that now is fostering a native species or
18 something like that or some other aspect.

19 What else am I missing, Brandon, as I
20 ramble? So, yeah, what it's going to require
21 is another step that results in a chief's
22 report that then goes up to Congress for
23 consideration.

24 MS. RENEE COTTEN: Good evening, I'm
25 Renee Cotten. Chief of Staff at Hinds

1 Community College. I'm here tonight on
2 behalf of our president Dr. Stephen Vacik who
3 is out of town but wanted to be represented
4 here because this is so important to us as an
5 institution but more importantly to the
6 community.

7 Hinds is the largest community college
8 in the state of Mississippi and probably the
9 most comprehensive as far as services that we
10 provide. We've been in business for over 100
11 years. We serve five counties, we have six
12 campuses and two of those specifically are in
13 Jackson.

14 What we need in Jackson is a vibrant
15 community that includes a stable water source
16 that allows us to continue to serve our
17 mission, and that is provide education to the
18 residents. And not only education, but we
19 also have the responsibility to help
20 businesses build a workforce, and we do that
21 every day. We need companies that can thrive
22 and survive in Jackson so that we can help
23 put people to work and stay in the community
24 that they live and nobody should be forced to
25 move because of issues that can have a

1 solution. You know, the continued loss of
2 population has definitely had an impact on
3 our campuses, but more importantly, the
4 challenges that we've had with the water
5 source have had a tremendous impact on our
6 campuses.

7 We have one campus on Chadwick Drive,
8 it's our Nursing Allied Health Center where
9 we train in 14 different health related
10 fields for employees to go to work. Every
11 time there's an issue with the water, that
12 causes us to close campus, causes us
13 challenges, particularly in the laboratory
14 settings. You cannot operate in a medical
15 environment without water, and so that
16 impacts our students.

17 We talk about the stress that that
18 brings to them as an individual who is trying
19 to complete their educational endeavors, but
20 it also affects us from an accreditation
21 standpoint. There are standards that we have
22 to fulfill and we want to do that, most
23 importantly for our students.

24 And then we have a Jackson campus that
25 is on Medgar Evers Boulevard, and the

1 commitment that Hinds made back in 1970s,
2 Jackson was the first satellite campus for
3 the college. And at one time at it's peak we
4 had 1600 students at that campus serving both
5 academics and career technical programs. The
6 continued challenges that we have, the
7 flooding, water, et cetera, have an impact on
8 us every day.

9 So as an institution, we are 100 percent
10 in support of the study to find a solution so
11 that we can continue to serve the community,
12 communities in our neighborhood, and that's
13 what we want to do.

14 I would also add that, you know, it's
15 not just about Jackson. Jackson is the
16 centerpiece of our state and Jackson is the
17 centerpiece of the area that we serve.
18 Jackson's success is success for the counties
19 surrounding us and the state as well. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. JEFF GOOD: Thank you, sir. My name
22 is Jeff Good. I'm a restaurateur here in
23 Jackson, Mississippi. Resident for 40 years.
24 I have three restaurants, employ 220 people.
25 I'm going to speak off the cuff, I hope my

1 points are direct and still able to see.

2 I don't think this flood control project
3 is going to fix the water supply system
4 problems that have caused me enumerable
5 shut-downs and problems. I don't think the
6 flood control problem is going to fix the
7 sewer problems we have, which are a mess, and
8 larger than the water. The thing about it,
9 none of that will be fixed. I think the only
10 way it's going to be fixed is by greater
11 resources and working together.

12 And when I first met Ricky Thigpen 30
13 years ago, when I opened my first restaurant,
14 he was a junior officer at the Convention and
15 Visitor's Bureau of Jackson when the city was
16 at its zenith. We had 200,000 people who
17 lived in the city. We have 150,000 now. We
18 had 33,000 kids in Jackson public schools.
19 We have 16,000 this year. Our city is
20 failing. Our city systems are failing. When
21 we did one of our first projects together, we
22 were working to try to keep WorldCom, MCI
23 WorldCom in the downtown building they were
24 in. We wanted to keep them in Jackson. This
25 week's news article is that Cracker Barrel is

1 closed. This is hard medicine for those of
2 us who live in Jackson. I speak more to our
3 fellow citizens than to the federal
4 government because you guys are going to do
5 what's right, you've been studying this for
6 years and there are competing challenges on
7 this. And there's the environmental versus
8 the economic development angle. The economic
9 development angle is not part of your core
10 plan. It is flood control. Thank God. We
11 need it.

12 But this city, this city needs economic
13 development. This city is not going to be
14 able to pay for fixing the water system, pay
15 for fixing the sewer system, pay for these
16 gentlemen I see in the back that join us from
17 JPD. We can't pay our bills and we need some
18 type of economic shot in the arm. And we
19 need an economic shot in the arm that
20 provides economic opportunity for all.

21 So the arguments about who gets the
22 contracts and who gets to build it and who
23 gets to carry the dirt, these are issues that
24 happen after the project is created. The key
25 is that there's a project on the table that

1 could fundamentally change the trajectory of
2 our city along with what Ted Henefin is doing
3 and along with citizenry, for once get
4 excited about something that we could do
5 together to provide some form of relief, not
6 just flood relief, but relief from the
7 constant drudgery of living in our city where
8 every single day is another challenge.

9 So I beg and plea that our citizenry
10 truly look at the opportunity that is here
11 and perhaps we can park some of our
12 prejudices about how we get here, sausage is
13 not made pretty boys and girls, I sell it all
14 the time. It ain't pretty, but the benefits
15 here could be extraordinary. I am
16 unabashedly for this project.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good evening,
18 everyone. Now, I've heard everything that's
19 been said and believe you me, some of it is
20 true and some of it is not.

21 Now, I live not too far from here, right
22 up in Northeast Junction, right off of Old
23 Canton Road, right below the spillway, and
24 the North Canton Club Subdivision. Then we
25 have the Canton Avenue Estates. Then we have

1 the Rolling Meadows, which is McLeod. Three
2 neighbors right here, right off of the river.
3 In '20, the houses along that line all the
4 way from the spillway itself is flooded
5 severely. Now, my neighbors behind me, the
6 water got in their homes. And what it did
7 for my house came right up to the door and
8 went up into our cul-de-sac. You can't tell
9 me that a God that I serve didn't stop that.
10 When the flood came again in '22, the waters
11 were gushing and they were about to do the
12 same thing, they was coming across the creek
13 right behind my neighbor. We stood there,
14 Mr. Warren and I, we watched the waters as
15 they were coming. And we just, you know,
16 within ourselves, hey, we fixing to go
17 through this again. Didn't want to deal with
18 it, but we had no choice. All of a sudden
19 the water stopped at some point in time as if
20 somebody had pulled a big drain plug up and
21 the water receded and went back. You have to
22 have been there to see it. Once again, my
23 God.

24 But I want you all to know, you people,
25 and I thank God for you all because you all

1 are the only somebody that's in this equation
2 that seems to have some sense about getting
3 some kind of resolution to this problem.
4 This comprehensive plan, yes, you do need a
5 comprehensive plan and it needs to be
6 filtered right now because I was at home a
7 few minutes ago just removing sandbags and
8 putting them out in the back near my car.
9 And when I thought about it, I said, I hope
10 these bags don't have to be used again
11 because sandbag, sandbag, sandbag, that's all
12 we've been doing.

13 We have neighbors that were around us we
14 never met, but this flooding thing, it has
15 brought our communities together, and we're
16 going to do the best that we can as these
17 three communities to work with you all and to
18 work with anybody and everybody that wants to
19 get this plan that's going to help Jackson,
20 not only from the spillway but all the way
21 down to the Gulf Coast as well, because the
22 big lake problem, which is the Ross Barnett
23 Reservoir, is one of the biggest problems.
24 I'm just going to tell you, be honest with
25 you and tell you the truth.

1 Now, when the waters come from the
2 Yockanookany up in Attala County all the way
3 down to -- back into River Bend, it gets into
4 the river there, then it comes into the Ross
5 Barnett Reservoir. Then when the reservoir
6 is so full and the houses that are there,
7 these boats that are there, that riverfront
8 lakefront property, which they can't control,
9 the lake is -- it's too full. So what do we
10 do? We open the flood gates, let the water
11 down and flood Jackson. That's the way it
12 happens. Let's just be honest.

13 We have a Governor that doesn't care
14 about us. We have a Mayor that doesn't know
15 what to do. Now, my thing is when you don't
16 know what to do about something you find
17 somebody that knows. Now, there's nothing
18 wrong with not knowing because a lot of us
19 don't know everything. You all don't know
20 everything, but if we all come together as
21 that business man over there said, and we
22 come up with this plan, and we develop this
23 plan and it may include the One Lake Project,
24 which some people think, you know, it's going
25 to help -- it's not going to help, it's going

1 to hinder. Who knows? Let's come together
2 and let's get some kind of resolution because
3 I'm not leaving. The only reason I'm still
4 here now is because of my parents. In '79 I
5 was 15 years old, scared to death because I
6 thought Jackson was just going to be wiped
7 away. You know we were under water. Here it
8 is, something, something years later right up
9 here.

10 My dad passed right before the pandemic
11 in '19. And I was glad in a sense that he
12 was gone because we talked about the flooding
13 and what was going to happen. He didn't see
14 this here. But my mother, when I had to
15 relocate her in '20 and then in '22, she
16 thought the flood was fixing to come back up
17 again, I don't want to put my mother through
18 this again.

19 The snakes that have been at our house
20 right up here in northeast Jackson. I was
21 fixing to go one Sunday morning on my way to
22 church, there was one of the biggest
23 moccasins coming right up to our front door.
24 If I open the door he's coming in just like
25 he lived there. There was a bookcase under

1 my garage with my books from Jackson State
2 when I finished my Master's program, and one
3 slithered -- I moved the thing, and when I
4 got home one day, I mean, snakes on top of
5 snakes.

6 Water and all this that's going on,
7 let's just resolve this issue. I mean, I'm
8 not leaving Jackson. I'm not leaving
9 Northeast Jackson. And all the people that
10 are up there with us, we're going to get
11 together if I have to go and pull all of them
12 out of there and bring them out here because
13 we going to be with -- here with you all for
14 the duration of this thing. There's a doable
15 plan. Roger Wicker was out there. He says,
16 this is a doable plan. Whatever the plan is,
17 we'll do the comprehensive one, it can and
18 will be done. I heard our president even say
19 that the funding is there, whatever we need.
20 Now, did you all hear that? He said it.
21 Okay.

22 And another thing, election time is
23 fastly approaching us. If we want to get rid
24 of the rim-rack that don't want to help us,
25 now is the time. Get up off of your behind

1 and go out and do what you need to do. It is
2 just that easy, go and vote. Then we won't
3 be complaining about this, that, and the
4 other. But I'm one of the younger persons
5 that you wanted to give you what you want,
6 and I don't mind telling it like it is,
7 because I'm going to get all my young posses
8 up here and around in the Jackson area and we
9 going to show these people something. We're
10 going to show them that we deserve to be
11 heard. We're going to show them that we
12 deserve to be fellow citizens of Jackson, and
13 we are not something that you can just sweep
14 in the corner and just leave by the wayside.
15 We deserve better. Don't y'all think y'all
16 deserve better than this. All of us deserve
17 better. And Ms. Yates, you going to be
18 hearing from me.

19 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Sir, can I get you to
20 do your final comments?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, you can.

22 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Thank you.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Like I said, when
24 it comes down to whatever comprehensive plan
25 you all come up with, we have confidence in

1 you all that y'all can do this. It can be
2 done. We're going to be here, like I said,
3 to support you all and whatever you all need
4 from us as a community up there in Northeast
5 Jackson, we're here for you. We're going to
6 help. We're going to do everything and
7 everything that we possibly can.

8 MS. MADELINE COOKS: My name is Madeline
9 Cooks. I'm going to try to go quick because
10 I know we are running out of time. I would
11 just like to say this project will make
12 flooding worse for much of Jackson. People
13 will be displaced from their homes, black
14 homeowners and landowners. So this is not an
15 issue -- I see all the white millionaires in
16 here salivating at the idea of another
17 reservoir and economic development for
18 Jackson because that economic development
19 will not include the black low income
20 residents of Jackson right now today. As a
21 community member and resident of a historic
22 neighborhood, Washington Addition, West
23 Jackson, an environmentalist, I oppose this
24 project with every fiber of my being and it
25 should not pass. It's a disgrace,

1 disgusting.

2 MR. MORRIS MOCK: Hello, I also oppose
3 this project. My name is Morris Mock.
4 There's two meetings going on right now.
5 There's a meeting that's saying this is
6 riverfront property, right. There's a
7 financial gain in a lot of these communities.
8 Some people are here because they feel like
9 they're going to make more money off this
10 project. The land has already been bought
11 all around.

12 Now, we're not talking about building,
13 we're not talking about flooding, like,
14 Madison area or even widening the reservoir.
15 There are other alternatives, correct. There
16 are other alternatives. We're going with
17 this extreme alternative where we're going to
18 have grandma's house up for sale, where we're
19 going to offer -- we're definitely not going
20 to offer them fair market value on this
21 house, right. So there's generational
22 wealth. There's the fine print. I'm going
23 to say the fine print that has not been
24 shown. The schools are at risk. The
25 hospitals are at risk. The grocery stores

1 are at risk, right. While everyone -- while
2 one group is just thinking about beachfront
3 or riverfront property, while the other is
4 saying, hey, how is grandma going to --
5 grandma going to pay her bill, or how is she
6 going to sustain her living, right.

7 I think that we are definitely not as
8 transparent. I think that every group is not
9 well represented here. I feel like there's
10 groups that's in Jackson -- how can I explain
11 this to Grandma? How can I explain what's
12 going on right now to Grandma? And we're
13 having a conversation about this, but there's
14 plenty of grandmothers in Jackson. There's
15 plenty of people in Jackson and we have a few
16 days just to make this decision and they
17 don't have a clue what's going on of the
18 decision with people are -- the only thing
19 they care about is riverfront property.

20 I hear a lot about, oh, well, my
21 business and the area that I live. I
22 respected your business, all due respect, I
23 do respect your business. The thing is, is
24 that Grandma's house, this is generational
25 wealth that she's going to lose. This is it.

1 Where she's going to go. You know, I mean,
2 and that -- and I feel it's a shame that
3 every -- because I'm one of those canvasers
4 that knocked on doors. And we're definitely
5 going to vote some people out. I'm one of
6 those canvasers that knocked on doors in
7 Jackson.

8 And this project has not been well
9 described. We don't even know. All we know
10 right now is that there's a plan and y'all
11 are going to do something. But the rich
12 people know exactly what y'all going to do
13 because they've already bought the property
14 around. But all we know are you telling us
15 is just this vague, there's a plan and trust
16 us with it and we're going to have some money
17 to fix this plan. I think it's a disgrace.
18 I don't feel like every group is well
19 represented here today, and I want to say
20 that. It's a shame.

21 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So, sir, I completely
22 appreciate everything you just said. And I
23 think this is a great opportunity to
24 reemphasize where we are in this process,
25 right. This is early engagement to let you

1 know the road ahead. There is no plan.
2 There is a plan people talk about, which is
3 One Lake plan that is submitted that you all
4 know a lot about, but we're still forming and
5 starting these other plans and we want to
6 hear your ideas. And there's meetings coming
7 that we haven't calendared yet. We've got
8 this kind of jammed in because we wanted to
9 get out ahead of the holidays, start to hear
10 down, hearing what's on your mind. These
11 sessions have been phenomenal, right.

12 So we have a lot of work to do. We want
13 to be transparent. We want to be inclusive.
14 We're going to need your help though, right.
15 We need people to talk to each other. We're
16 all here to roll up our sleeves and find
17 those solutions that get this community where
18 they need to be and not a flood risk and the
19 other things that may come with that.

20 MR. SAM DAVID: I'm Sam David. I'm a
21 resident of Jackson. I live at 255 Eastbrook
22 Street, just up the street off of Lakeland
23 Drive behind the firehouse. Most of my life
24 I've lived in Belhaven and Belhaven Heights
25 neighborhood. I have an office downtown.

1 I'm a lawyer. We have a central business
2 district. We have skyscrapers. We have
3 people working in those buildings. We have a
4 large capitol complex. I'm in support of the
5 lake project. It is designed to protect our
6 downtown from flooding. Our central business
7 district is a key economic component of the
8 state of Mississippi. We also have an
9 enormous post office downtown where a good
10 bit of the mail in Mississippi is distributed
11 overnight. That would be inundated by a
12 flood.

13 I've heard discussions about this being
14 some private deal. This is a -- the lake
15 project is a project of the levee board which
16 is comprised of Mayors and members of the
17 Board of Supervisors of Hinds and Rankin
18 County. It has drawn support of the
19 Mississippi Legislature, which has members
20 from every area of the state. It has been a
21 major project of the Metro Jackson
22 Partnership or Chamber of Commerce.

23 The Lake project is designed to protect
24 Lakeland Drive going out towards the airport.
25 Increasingly, that has become the medical

1 corridor for central Mississippi. We cannot
2 have that area flooded. We can't have
3 doctors and nurses not being able to come to
4 work at the two hospitals there and the
5 various clinics.

6 And I don't mind saying this, I kept up
7 with the appropriation process. I read the
8 Washington Post, Politico, and the Wall
9 Street Journal, that \$221,000,000 wasn't
10 really for some, I guess, theoretical
11 concept. Political leaders had in mind a
12 project that's been developed at the local
13 level, which is the Lake project, where a
14 consensus has been built around that.

15 And the fact that Congress included that
16 in the infrastructure bill should give this
17 Corps a signal about what the elected
18 branches of government want out of this
19 agency and others.

20 And I don't mind saying the Lake project
21 is a lot of things, but it's also a
22 construction project. It will put men and
23 women to work. They will be paid, paid and
24 making wages. In all likelihood, the
25 contractors will have to get skilled laborers

1 from the Union halls, from the operating
2 engineers, the laborers, electricians, and
3 plumbers, and pipefitters. That's a good
4 thing in this area. There's a lot more I
5 could say but I'll just leave it at that.

6 MR. SOCRATES GARRETT: Good evening.
7 I'm Socrates Garrett, and I've been in
8 Jackson a long, long time. And we've studied
9 this process and this project for 20 plus
10 years, and we continue to hear that we have
11 to study. It was very, very difficult for us
12 to get these communities together. I served
13 as past chairman of the Greater Jackson
14 Chamber Partnership. I served as a member of
15 the levee board. It was difficult to get
16 Rankin County and Hinds County and all of
17 these various Mayors on one page, but we came
18 to a consensus that this was best for the
19 metropolitan area.

20 Now, a lot of conversation has focused
21 on Jackson, and rightfully so. Jackson is
22 not the only beneficiary of this Lake
23 project. On both sides of the river there
24 stands to be tremendous economic opportunity.

25 Now, one thing I would like to say about

1 the local partners, we have been in agreement
2 for a long time. I made so many trips to
3 Washington, D.C. in support of this project.
4 The late Senator Thad Cochran was in support
5 of this project. We lost so many people that
6 fought this fight so valiantly. Leland Speed
7 fought this fight so valiantly until the end.
8 And people have contributed their time and
9 their money to try to make this project come
10 forward.

11 And so let's focus on Jackson just a
12 little bit. Jackson cannot grow to the
13 north. There's no growth opportunities
14 there. It cannot grow to the east, it's
15 bound by locked boundaries there. It cannot
16 grow to the west. Clinton has it blocked
17 there. It cannot grow to the south, it runs
18 into Byram, incorporated there. Jackson is
19 locked into its field geographically without
20 any potential for growth. The only potential
21 for growth that it has is within that
22 footprint. And the only opportunity that we
23 have now is to make this river that God
24 blessed us with, be a blessing to the
25 citizens of Jackson and provide the economic

1 opportunity that makes this place become a
2 tourist attraction, makes us to have a river
3 beachfront that we can walk on, that we have
4 hotels in the middle of the river, that we
5 have all of these businesses that are
6 surrounded. It's the only chance that
7 Jackson has got to grow and attract a new tax
8 base because other than that, it's on a very
9 downward spiral.

10 This project will do more than just stop
11 the flooding in Jackson. The One Lake
12 Project that's been recommended to the Corps
13 for the last 20 years, and when -- we came
14 all together as local citizens, our problem
15 was trying to get the Department of the Army
16 and the Corp on the same page. It was a
17 tremendous challenge as it continues to be a
18 challenge now because you still have not
19 committed to the local preferred project,
20 which we would have hoped that you would have
21 done so by now.

22 It's critically important that Jackson
23 has an opportunity, and the metropolitan area
24 has an opportunity to develop this river. It
25 is the single most important asset that we

1 have. We cannot allow it to continue to be
2 underutilized in the way that it's currently
3 being done. We must protect our citizens and
4 our homes from flooding, but we must grow our
5 economy. It must grow our base. It must
6 make Jackson a place that is a destiny spot,
7 which we currently have no other way of doing
8 that other than this river. Thank you very
9 much.

10 MS. DELL MOCKER: My name is Dell
11 Mocker, and I don't think we've heard a lot
12 from people who actually live in the areas or
13 who actually were impacted by the flood.
14 Like, my house was flooded in 2020. I've
15 been in my house -- well, I've had my house
16 ten and a half years approximately. My house
17 flooded in 2020. Well, March of 2020 -- no,
18 February 2020, Covid happened March of 2020,
19 so everything was kind of put on hold. I
20 moved back into my house in March of 2022, so
21 just approximately a year or so back in my
22 house.

23 A lot has been stated here. I'm glad
24 that you all, you know, talked about the
25 mental health toll that it takes on you.

1 It's a lot of anxiety that came about because
2 of having to deal with the floods, all the
3 stress, loss of material things. The flood
4 insurance prices are astronomical. I learned
5 a lot living in the flood zone. Can't, you
6 know -- well, my situation with the flood
7 insurance is flood insurance, it has to be
8 paid January of every year. And for my
9 house, you know, in a low area it's \$6,000
10 that has to be paid out of pocket. I can't
11 afford that, so I had it through the bank
12 because I still owe on my house and they're
13 all concerned with making themselves whole.
14 So at some point it's going to come a point
15 of where I owe less than what I can repair my
16 house with because the cost of everything has
17 gone up. So I am for these voluntary buyouts
18 or whatever that you all are proposing
19 because at some point my house is going to
20 flood again and I'm not going to be able to
21 afford to repair it.

22 So, yeah, I'm also not in the best shape
23 to have to be trying to pack up and move my
24 belongings that I am trying to save. I've
25 had to, you know, call on family and friends

1 at the last minute. For the August '22 flood
2 that occurred, thank God the water didn't get
3 in my house this time, but water did come
4 halfway up my yard. Ants got in my house
5 trying to escape the flood up on window
6 sills. That was the first time I had seen
7 something like that happen. What else?

8 So, yeah, I am a proponent of a
9 solution. And also, Jackson, Mississippi, we
10 are 100 years behind a lot of other places
11 with great economic, you know, facilities,
12 entertainment. I consider myself to be -- I
13 don't know, on the average side of middle
14 age, but I did leave the state for better
15 opportunities. I'm not going to lie, I did
16 for a couple of years. And I came back
17 because of family and the pandemic. And I
18 encourage young people that I interact with
19 in my family to get out of Mississippi
20 because you are limited here. And I know
21 that's not good, that's not great, but with
22 the resources, with the lack of resources
23 that we have, and all our issues that we are
24 faced with in Mississippi and in Jackson,
25 it's the best opportunity for young people

1 because I saw first hand myself.

2 Now, one concern that I do have was when
3 you talked about, like, a non-federal
4 partnership because of our hospital
5 legislation that somebody talked about in our
6 hospital local government, I do have concerns
7 that, you know, we all formulate your plan
8 and propose it that they're not going to come
9 together to do what needs to be done to help
10 this come to fruition. And that's all.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Unintelligible
12 younger speaker.)

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (unintelligible)
14 lifetime Jackson resident. I'm a -- I'm not
15 quite retired, but (unintelligible) years as
16 a nurse. I live now in Washington Addition.
17 So Town Creek runs past our neighborhood and
18 it does flood every time rain comes. It sits
19 right immediately to the street next to the
20 creek, there's a school. There's two
21 schools. Jim Hill High School and Isabelle
22 Elementary. So they are impacted already.
23 And that creek is a creek that the plan
24 developers said is going to flood with the
25 One Lake plan. They predict that.

1 I want to raise a couple of points.
2 One, this is not the only way to create
3 economic development. We all agree Jackson
4 needs economic development. Make the river
5 accessible to the 80 percent black population
6 that's not able to get to it, that doesn't
7 live in Belhaven. Let's start there.

8 Lots of organizations have weighed in on
9 why this is a bad plan. So the fact that the
10 local government is pushing it and it hasn't
11 been accepted, that ought to clue all of us
12 in that it's probably not good for us.
13 That's why they don't want it to happen.
14 That's why they're probably is push back.

15 This year, April 18, 2023, the American
16 River Association put the Pearl River number
17 three endangered river directly related to
18 this proposed -- what they call it is flood
19 mitigation. It's an economic development
20 posting like it's flood mitigation basically.
21 It's a wolf in sheep's clothing. And I'm
22 disappointed in all of our local leaders that
23 they signed on this and sold out the majority
24 of Jackson. That's really what it feels
25 like.

1 The Pearl River is the number four
2 contributing river that feeds right into the
3 Gulf Coast. I'm not smart enough, I'm not
4 versed in all of the biological diversity
5 that we would be damaging, but I know it's
6 bad because I've read enough about it.
7 Numerous species of birds, numerous species
8 of fish. I think anyone in this room is
9 aware that our climate is an issue right now
10 globally, so why do you want to decimate
11 further in the name of flood? Hold on a
12 minute. People keep coming up here
13 testifying. I don't think anyone thinks
14 floods are good. Is there anybody in here
15 who is pro flood? I don't think so. And we
16 don't need to pretend like this is the only
17 solution. I've seen the alternative. The
18 one from the Berkley students is wonderful,
19 but I'm, again, not an engineer, so I'm sure
20 there are other ideas. I've read that the
21 American Rivers Association specifically
22 reached out to you all and said, please don't
23 consider this plan, consider something that's
24 more environmentally sustainable and that you
25 can side with readily. We don't need to

1 guess about how to mitigate a flood in a
2 healthy way. Nature teaches us. We can
3 follow that pattern and those lessons. It's
4 good that engineers have been able to
5 manipulate rivers and put them where they
6 want them so that people can spend money and
7 clap, but it's not going to matter if we
8 don't have fish and we don't have birds and
9 we don't have the Pearl River because it's
10 endangered right now associated with this.
11 Thank you very much.

12 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So thank you for that.
13 Just for true transparency, organizations
14 like American Rivers and all kinds of
15 organizations come to see us, we always take
16 those meetings, but we also always come here
17 to the communities so that we listen to all
18 views, but particularly the folks who live
19 here, right. So don't want anyone to think
20 that that's not happening. It's happened all
21 across the area and it's our responsibility
22 to do so.

23 MR. ANDY HILTON: Hi, my name is Andy
24 Hilton, lifelong Jackson resident and Pearl
25 River recreator. First of all, a comment, I

1 think there's a misconception that our water
2 crisis was caused by flooding. I mean, it
3 was, but it wasn't -- the plant never
4 flooded, it's a chemistry change in the
5 reservoir. I think a lot of people --
6 somehow that's gotten tied together. No
7 flood control project would have prevented
8 that. A properly funded water plant would
9 have prevented that.

10 Public comments and maybe a question. I
11 just returned from a national conference on
12 floods, the ASFPM, saw some presentations
13 from some of your colleagues. It seems like
14 there's a nationwide trend where people are
15 removing dams, setting levees back,
16 connecting the river to the flood plain,
17 which is actually the presentation that
18 someone from the Corps gave, it seems like
19 this project is way out of line from the
20 national trend. Is there anywhere else in
21 the country where people are building a new
22 impoundment like this?

23 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Yes, when we design
24 projects to meet the community's resilience
25 needs, yes, there are places that we're going

1 to set back levees. There are places where
2 we're building infrastructure impounds.
3 There's places where dams are being moved.
4 Those are all different reasons for different
5 things. Some places the dams no longer meet
6 their need and they come down. In one of the
7 sessions earlier there were navigation
8 channels lost and then turned over because we
9 no longer provide navigation. So it kind of
10 depends on the situation. But, yes, all
11 those are always an option.

12 MR. ANDY HILTON: Thanks very much.
13 Thanks.

14 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: My name is Emmy
15 Herrington and I have a few questions
16 concerning the One Lake Project. My first
17 question was what is the assessment of the
18 environmental impact? I've done some
19 research in the last -- on the One Lake
20 Project in the past few days with
21 contradicting results. Some say that
22 environmental species could be endangered
23 species in the Pearl River -- will be
24 endangered by the One Lake Project and some
25 say that that has already been proven to not

1 be the case.

2 BRANDON DAVIS: What was your name
3 again?

4 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Emmy Herrington.

5 BRANDON DAVIS: Well, thank you for
6 coming up, that's -- I couldn't stand up
7 there at your age and do that, so thanks for
8 your question. So good question.

9 So what we're going to do is once we
10 know what all the plans are, the various
11 alternatives we're looking at, we will have
12 to go through and look at the environmental
13 impacts of all of those. One of the things
14 that we have been required to do is to offer
15 a plan to the Secretary that is the least
16 environmentally damaging plan. So to answer
17 your question is that, yes, right now, I
18 wouldn't have an answer for you, but what we
19 will do is we will go through and look at
20 everything to make sure that we are proposing
21 or offering something to the Secretary that
22 will be the least environmentally damaging.
23 Does that answer your question?

24 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Yes, sir, it does.

25 And also, I read in my research

1 something about communities south of the
2 river, that they might get affected
3 negatively by the One Lake Project. Is this
4 true?

5 BRANDON DAVIS: So, we talked about that
6 earlier. It's one of the things that we're
7 required to do with the state, we have to
8 look at the downstream impacts as well. So
9 any town south of Jackson that you're talking
10 about we would have to look and see what the
11 impacts would be. And that was based on, I
12 believe, one of our -- I'm not going to bore
13 you with the long legislation, but it's
14 legislation that appeared to us that we have
15 to look at downstream impacts as well.

16 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Okay. Thank you.

17 COLONEL KLEIN: Let me continue on that
18 one, too. It's a really good question. We
19 just came from Slide, so we just had two
20 sessions down there where we heard from local
21 communities down there, and today there are
22 negative impacts that they're experiencing
23 down the river. Okay. Silting, because that
24 is -- it's mostly because a lot of the aging
25 infrastructure on the river. They're

1 experiencing some low flows. Other testimony
2 comes in and says they're experiencing
3 extended flooding down in that stretch of the
4 river. There's silt build up in these
5 various areas. And so we've received a lot
6 of really good feedback from them that is
7 going to inform, you know, and help us inform
8 and go back to our leadership and let them
9 know what the impacts are comprehensively
10 along the whole stretch of the river.

11 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Thank you. So in
12 conclusion the environmental impacts have not
13 been completed for this plan that we have
14 here. Okay, thank you.

15 MR. KEN MORGAN: I'm not an engineer and
16 I'm not a hydrologist. Ken Morgan. I live
17 in Marion County, Mississippi, which is about
18 100 miles down south of here. I served the
19 Legislature at the present time in the House
20 of Representatives.

21 Two gentleman, in truth, covered what I
22 would have said, one in that brown shirt
23 right there and the gentleman with that red
24 hat on, told it just like the problem it is.
25 You going to check and see to start with, you

1 need to start with the Ross Barnett
2 Reservoir. When that thing was built I
3 remember it. I'm a little older than maybe
4 they are. It was issued and passed to be
5 used for flood control. Well, now they'll
6 tell you they don't have the authority to do
7 with anything to do with flood control. They
8 can't come up with a daily operation
9 procedure manual about the Ross Barnett
10 Reservoir. They can run it by telephone.

11 With that said, I want y'all to know we
12 didn't move is the state line. Talking about
13 Hinds and Rankin County. This things going
14 all the way to Biloxi, Gulfport, Pascagoula,
15 down in that area, all the way through
16 because we're not talking about economic
17 development, we're talking about flood
18 control. Flood control could be alleviated
19 to a degree, but you're not going to cut it
20 off 100 percent. New Orleans proved that.
21 Baton Rouge proved that. Eagle Lake proved
22 that because they trying to get pumps over
23 there on Steel Bayou and that didn't ever
24 happen. When the water falls within, you
25 have 12, 13, 15 inch rain, it's going to

1 flood. That's God's way of doing things.
2 Just the way it is. But we can help this
3 river and probably save some this river
4 because we have actually lost a large part of
5 the river.

6 When I was a kid growing up I knew what
7 it looked like. All my property, my
8 granddaddy's property developed right on down
9 through generation and generation we had
10 property on the Pearl River, had a farm out
11 there. Believe it or not, when I was 12 or
12 13 years old I was standing on the bank of
13 the river in October squirrel hunting and
14 look down there and see the catfish swimming
15 in the river, just the clarity of the water.
16 You can't do that today. That's a major
17 problem. We have problems with drinking
18 water. We have problems with sewage. We
19 have problems with too much water.

20 And you're right, we're going to have to
21 work together and your leaders is going to
22 have to take responsibility to fix these
23 things because they are behind the times.
24 The sewage processing plant is deleted, it's
25 old. It needs to be updated. The water

1 system, as you well know. Drinking water,
2 residents, businesses, cafes, restaurants
3 can't even serve food because they don't have
4 drinking water. There's no excuse for that.

5 And this price tag for this thing, it's
6 not just going to affect the people in Hinds
7 and Rankin County, it's going to probably put
8 the burden on every taxpayer in the state of
9 Mississippi to fix this One Lake plan and
10 it's no guarantee it's going to work. And
11 you talk about you get lake front property to
12 live on, they had cotton fields and corn
13 fields out there on 43 years ago, soybean
14 fields, agricultural products. You couldn't
15 buy that property and you couldn't hardly
16 sell it along the river. Lake goes in, that
17 \$3,500 an acre land become \$60,000 a pop.
18 People won't be able to afford it. You ain't
19 going to have a lake on your property. It's
20 going to need an upgrade. It needs to be
21 upgraded, but you got levees protecting, One
22 Lake Plan. How you going to get water across
23 to meander across the levee? You going to
24 have to have pumps in it somewhere.

25 There's more to this than -- the big

1 picture is not being shown. I'm going to be
2 truthful about that. This thing is one of
3 the biggest realty scams that's ever took
4 place in the state of Mississippi. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Ma'am.

7 MS. LAURENE RYDER: My name is Laurene
8 Ryder. I've been a resident of Jackson for
9 23 years. My family grew up here, my
10 children grew up here. Over the years we
11 went to LeFleur's Bluff repeatedly. We hike
12 there. We picnicked there. We barbecued
13 there.

14 From what I understand -- it's very hard
15 to look at these maps and see exactly what's
16 going to happen, but my understanding is this
17 park will be destroyed, it will be flooded.
18 It already is flooded a couple of months a
19 year, but with this One Lake Plan it will be
20 destroyed and I think that it is tragic that
21 we have to destroy such a gem in the City of
22 Hartford to supposedly control flooding. I
23 think this One Lake Plan was -- I see people
24 are laughing because they think this is
25 funny. This One Lake Plan is a real estate

1 plan. It was developed with that in mind and
2 it's obviously just to create prime real
3 estate development. It's obvious from
4 everybody talking here that we do need a
5 flood plan. I would highly urge you to
6 consider alternatives to the construction of
7 One Lake Plan, such as channeling or other
8 alternatives like that. Thank you.

9 MS. JAN HELOWITZ: Hello, my name is Jan
10 Helowitz. I live in Jackson. I came to a
11 meeting here quite a few years ago the last
12 time I remember hearing about, and I was very
13 disappointed in that meeting because people
14 made speeches and then we were invited to go
15 around the room and have individual
16 conversations with people about things that
17 were posted on easels like this and so there
18 was no real feedback for everybody to be able
19 to hear.

20 I have not looked up anything in advance
21 to coming to this meeting. I expected to
22 come and hear what the office had been doing
23 since that last meeting to come up with a
24 better plan than what you had before, and I
25 heard there's no plan. I don't know what

1 that means or why you're having a meeting or
2 feedback about no plan. Because it's
3 certainly clear that nobody's pro-flood.
4 Everybody's pro-economic development.
5 Everybody's for environmental justice. I'm
6 just not sure why this meeting was called.

7 Now, when -- I guess you're new here or
8 something. New to this process. Who's been
9 doing something all these years because the
10 problem hasn't been solved. It hasn't been
11 addressed. You haven't -- I'm just a little
12 confused as to why there isn't something to
13 be looking at, something to hear, the detail.
14 We proposed this for this area. And then
15 people come up to a board and say it's good
16 because, or the people come up and say that
17 it would be a problem because. Then we can
18 look at what the different views are of the
19 particular things. Other than that, why are
20 we here? Or -- and I'm sorry that there's --
21 at least in the beginning it seemed like
22 there were two sides to what was happening,
23 and we sure don't need that because we all do
24 want a good plan that helps everybody don't
25 we? I think the whole process and -- I don't

1 know, whatever else is is supposed to be
2 going on here and come back here with some
3 particulars that you think are the best and
4 some good reasons, tell us why, and then
5 listen to particulars about what it is that
6 people are concerned about and possibly pay
7 attention.

8 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So, ma'am, thank you
9 for that. Couple of things, and can't do it
10 quickly, but you're exactly right. In the
11 few years the things have stopped and
12 started, that's true. That's absolutely
13 true. The last time the Corps actually
14 released a report was in 2007 I believe.
15 From that time forward because there was no
16 decision made, there wasn't an implementable
17 plan, not a lot happened. Beginning in 2018
18 Rankin-Hinds pursued a feasibility study that
19 was submitted to us in '22, right. So we are
20 now acting on that activity that they did
21 under their authority. So we are responding
22 to that, opening that process to get in with
23 these early engagement meetings to say we've
24 been directed to go look at that study as
25 well as other alternatives by Congress. We

1 have money out there that's -- Bipartisan
2 Infrastructure Law set aside for Jackson.
3 The question now is how we can use this
4 process to communicate with you what those
5 ideas are. And since it's been a long time
6 since we've engaged to get to hear what folks
7 say in this session, other sessions. We'll
8 have two more virtual ones next week, and we
9 will be coming back with those plans. We
10 don't have a timeline on when exactly, but
11 we'll have an additional outreach session.

12 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Sir.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I stand before
14 you today as a citizen, advocate, young
15 person of the resilient city of Jackson,
16 Mississippi. I'm here to speak and advocate
17 on the opportunity that holds the potential
18 to completely change the trajectory of this
19 city's future. The opportunities to local
20 preference, Alternative C. This opportunity
21 is more than just a flood control measure,
22 it's an investment in our city's future.
23 It's a path towards economic prosperity. And
24 above all, an opportunity to enhance quality
25 of life for all Jacksonians.

1 First, the primary purpose of the
2 project, flood control. For years we've seen
3 the devastating impact of floods on our city,
4 lives disrupted, properties damaged, peace of
5 mind destroyed. By expanding the river's
6 capacity we can dramatically reduce the risk
7 of floods and create a safer environment for
8 all our citizens.

9 Now, let's dive into the economic
10 potential of this project. It seemed less
11 prone to floods or a more conducive
12 atmosphere for businesses to thrive, reduce
13 risk, increase confidence, attracting both
14 local and outside investments. Imagine the
15 job opportunities, the rise in property
16 values, and the overall economic prosperity.
17 This is the city. This is the Jackson we're
18 aiming to build, a vibrant city with
19 opportunities. The benefits don't stop there
20 with flood control. Picture this, a new
21 state of the art water facility powered by
22 the river's flooding. Clean, stable,
23 drinkable water for every corner of Jackson.

24 Further, the project has power to not
25 only shape the City's future, but can

1 reconnect us with the part of Jackson that is
2 for too long been assigned to the background.
3 That is our waterways with the Pearl River
4 and the creeks, provides an opportunity to
5 bring our citizens closer to nature, foster
6 deeper appreciation for our waterways into
7 the parts of our lives, for a meaningful
8 relationship with those waterways. Imagine a
9 city where a river could not solely just be a
10 waterway but be a focal point for community
11 life. A city where waterways become our
12 pathways encouraging citizens of all ages to
13 explore, learn, and appreciate.

14 By integrating parts and trails of this
15 project, access to nature is not just about
16 to those that are given. This plan will
17 actually have green spaces for families to
18 gather, bridges for our community to come
19 together and seeing vibrant examples of
20 cities like Chattanooga and Austin. By
21 integrating our lives with the river we are
22 fostering appreciation to the values of the
23 (unintelligible). Beauty and
24 (unintelligible) and importance of
25 conservation. The Pearl River water project

1 is an opportunity to bring nature closer to
2 the doorstep, foster community -- and foster
3 a community that's not just aware of its
4 surroundings, but is deeply integrated with
5 it. The Pearl River One Lake project isn't
6 just an engineering project. It's a symbole
7 of the City's resilience and it represents
8 the determination to protect our citizens, to
9 fix our economy and to enhance our quality of
10 life.

11 This is your chance to redefine the
12 narrative of our city, transform Jackson from
13 a city at rest to a city that thrives. I
14 encourage you to seek this opportunity.
15 Let's create a safe and more prosperous
16 environment for Jackson for all. Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To Colonel Klein.
18 In looking at the two maps here of the 1965
19 channelization I've got a two-part question.
20 The reservoir was operational in 1965, right.
21 Why was it necessary to channelize three
22 years later? First part of the question.

23 And then why didn't the channelization
24 work is the second part?

25 And then why do we think it's going to

1 work now with another plan?

2 COLONEL KLEIN: You are really testing
3 my engineering skills right now because I was
4 not involved in that project. So the Ross
5 Barnett was not a federal project, so that is
6 not -- it's not a federal project. At that
7 time.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (unintelligible.)

9 COLONEL KLEIN: Yeah, that's fair.
10 Actually, you know, you go up and down, you
11 know, I-55 and you're talking about some old
12 infrastructure that was designed for a
13 specific purpose with the technology that we
14 had at that time.

15 There's another thing in that picture
16 that you're highlighting over there. Two
17 other major pieces of infrastructure. I-55
18 and I-20 are now there, right. So were we,
19 you know, I don't know the full history about
20 it. I don't know why Ross Barnett was there,
21 why, you know, how Eisenhower's visions for
22 an interstate system and how that was
23 developed to connect through Jackson, but
24 it's all tied together. So the
25 channelization probably is how the vision for

1 the interstate system and that's why the
2 channelization is set up. Is it working? I
3 think that's a --

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (unintelligible)
5 floods all seem to be after 1968. There was
6 not a lot of flooding that I'm aware. I'm
7 not -- I've been in Jackson my whole life. I
8 was born in '58.

9 COLONEL KLEIN: Yeah, we can take a look
10 at that for sure. It's hard to know 100
11 percent the history to why we put in what we
12 did. It's a lot more comprehensive than one
13 singular answer. I'll have to get back to
14 you on that.

15 MR. THOMAS SHAW: I will just mention,
16 if you would, please note that on your
17 comment card. That would help us get that
18 into the record and get that addressed, if
19 you would, please. Thank you.

20 MS. JESS ENRIQUEZ: Hello. So I may be
21 the last person, so thank you for taking more
22 comments. My name is Jess Enriquez. I work
23 for the Immigrant Alliance for Justice and
24 Equity. And I can't say that I've ever been
25 in the immigrant community, I'm not an

1 immigrant. My dad is an immigrant. But I do
2 work with this population that when there's
3 flooding and when there's environmental
4 disasters, manmade or natural disasters, they
5 don't have access to MEMA or FEMA or any kind
6 of resources to assist when these things
7 happen. Like, there's been a lot of talk
8 about being citizens of Jackson and being
9 citizens of Mississippi, but there are people
10 here that are residents that call Mississippi
11 and Jackson home. And I just wanted to make
12 that space and hold that space for them.

13 But the reason that I'm here is because
14 I oppose the One Lake Project. And the
15 reason that I even know about the One Lake
16 Project is because of a young man that
17 brought this to our attention, to the
18 attention of my organization. So I just,
19 yeah, want to hold space and make sure that
20 you all know that I and my organization
21 oppose the One Lake Project. Thank you.

22 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Any last comments or
23 feedback?

24 If not, we reached our allotted time
25 limit, so we would very, very much like to

1 thank you for your participation in being
2 here. It was invaluable to us all and will
3 help inform the decisions made going down the
4 path forward. As we mentioned earlier, they
5 will become part of the public record. So
6 thank you all and please take care going
7 home.

8 (Hearing concluded at 8:24 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

2 I, Dawn Dillard, Court Reporter and
3 Notary Public, in and for the State of
4 Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing
5 contains a true and correct transcript of the
6 public hearing of USACE Pearl River Flood Risk
7 Management Project, as taken by me in the
8 aforementioned matter at the time and place
9 heretofore stated, as taken by stenotype and later
10 reduced to typewritten form under my supervision
11 by means of computer-aided transcription.

12 I further certify that under the
13 authority vested in me by the State of Mississippi
14 that the witness was placed under oath by me to
15 truthfully answer all questions in the matter.

16 I further certify that, to the best of
17 my knowledge, I am not in the employ of or related
18 to any party in this matter and have no interest,
19 monetary or otherwise, in the final outcome of
20 this matter.

21 Witness my signature and seal this the
22 20th day of August, 2023.

23

DAWN DILLARD, #1763
CCR

24

25 My Commission Expires:
March 7, 2025