

# In Re: USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management (Monticello, MS)

Transcript of Meeting

July 11, 2024

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Transcript of Meeting 7/11/2024

TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARING OF  
USACE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT  
PROJECT MEETING  
MONTICELLO, MISSISSIPPI  
DATE: July 11, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Vicksburg District  
public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk  
Management Project was held at Lawrence County  
Civic Center, 125 E Broad Street, Monticello,  
Mississippi beginning at 6:00 p.m.

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 Jeremiah Gipson  
6 Brandon Davis  
7 Eric Bush  
8 Keith Turner  
9 Troy Constance

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1           MR. SHAW: Okay. Good afternoon,  
2           everybody. My name is Tom Shaw. I'm the  
3           project manager for the Vicksburg District  
4           Corps of Engineers. Thank you for your  
5           attendance and for coming out for this public  
6           meeting. This is the fourth public meeting  
7           for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management  
8           Draft EIS presentation. We're very pleased  
9           that you could be here, and we will get  
10          going. I have a remote here, and it works,  
11          which is a wonderful thing. So I hope  
12          everybody can see. I hope everybody can  
13          hear. If I'm not speaking loud enough,  
14          please let me know and I'll talk up.

15                 So this is the fourth in a series of  
16                 four meetings. We started out yesterday in  
17                 Jackson, Mississippi, with two different  
18                 meetings there, two different locales. We  
19                 had a meeting this morning at 11:00 a.m. In  
20                 Slidell. And this will be our finale, if you  
21                 will, for this round of public meetings.

22                 So I would like to make some  
23                 introductions. Over here at the head table,  
24                 we have Robyn Colosimo. She is the Deputy  
25                 Assistant Secretary for the Army for Project

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1 Planning and Policy Review.

2 We have Mr. Eric Bush, who is the  
3 Director of Planning and Policy at  
4 headquarters, United States Army Corps of  
5 Engineers.

6 We have Colonel Jeremiah Gipson, who's  
7 the Vicksburg District Commander for the  
8 Vicksburg District Corps of Engineers.

9 We have Keith Turner, who is with the  
10 Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood Control and  
11 Drainage District as our representative for  
12 them.

13 We have Troy Constance, which is right  
14 here behind me. I apologize. Troy is the  
15 Chief of the Regional Planning Environmental  
16 Division South.

17 And Brandon Davis is in the back.  
18 Brandon is the planning liaison and commonly  
19 known as RPEDS. That's Mr. Constance's  
20 organization.

21 So, at this time, I would like to  
22 recognize any government officials that we  
23 might have here with us tonight. I think  
24 Anna was here a few minutes ago. I'm not  
25 sure. There she is. I'm sorry. So we have

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1 Anna Timms who is with Senator Hyde Smith's  
2 office. And I'm not sure if Brad made it in.  
3 We expect Brad Ferguson with Senator Wicker's  
4 office as well. I want to express our  
5 appreciation to Mayor Martha Watts for her  
6 participation in making all this happen here.  
7 I'm not sure where the mayor is right this  
8 moment. Oh, there she is. I'm sorry. I  
9 think I saw you come in. I apologize.

10 And so, at this time, one of the things  
11 that -- if you followed these meetings any  
12 much in the way at all, about a little over a  
13 year ago, in May of 2023, we had, if you  
14 will, a scoping meeting where we did a series  
15 of public meetings. And the current  
16 commander at that time was Colonel Chris  
17 Klein. Colonel Klein has basically moved on  
18 with a different mission, and we have our new  
19 commander, Colonel Gipson, and we've got a  
20 video that we would like to show everybody  
21 that basically talks about that transition.

22 COLONEL KLEIN: I'm Christopher Klein.  
23 On the 7th of June 2024, the Vicksburg  
24 District published a Draft Environmental  
25 Impact Study, a pivotal step in our journey

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1           towards mitigating the flood risks plaguing  
2           the Pearl River Basin. Publishing the Pearl  
3           River Basin DEIS marks a significant  
4           milestone in our collaborative efforts with  
5           the community and local leaders to deliver a  
6           flood risk management strategy tailored to  
7           the unique needs of the City of Jackson and  
8           its surrounding areas. We are committed to  
9           providing a solution that manages flood risk  
10          and at the same time enables a wide range of  
11          additional benefits.

12                 It was an honor to lead the team through  
13          the publication of this important document.  
14          My time at the Vicksburg district, however,  
15          has come to an end as the Army's transitioned  
16          me to another role in a district serving our  
17          warfighters, allies and partners in the  
18          Middle East.

19                 The good news, though, is that the Army  
20          chose a very capable leader to continue the  
21          good work in the district. I'd like to  
22          introduce Colonel Jeremiah Gipson. Colonel  
23          Gipson most recently served as deputy at the  
24          Mississippi Valley Division in Vicksburg and  
25          has been following the development of this

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1 plan for months. Colonel Gipson Jeremiah,  
2 welcome.

3 COLONEL GIPSON: Thank you, Chris Klein,  
4 and for your dedication and leadership.

5 To our partners, I assure you that the  
6 mission entrusted to us will continue with  
7 the same vigor and resolve. Together, we  
8 will navigate the complexities of the Pearl  
9 River Basin with diligence and foresight.  
10 For decades, flooding along the Pearl River  
11 has disrupted lives and livelihoods. Various  
12 proposals have been presented, yet none  
13 garnered definitive support. In July 2022,  
14 the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and  
15 Drainage Control District presented a locally  
16 preferred plan to the Assistant Secretary of  
17 the Army for Civil Works, the Honorable  
18 Michael Conner. This set the stage for the  
19 Corps involvement. Secretary Connor tasked  
20 us with bridging data gaps, identifying the  
21 National Economic Development Plan, and  
22 evaluating the merits of that plan. Through  
23 extensive public engagement, we've gained  
24 valuable insights, ranging from the need for  
25 recreational areas, concerns about water



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1 volume, and existing concerns in the lower  
2 Pearl River. As we move forward, your  
3 engagement is critical. We invite you to  
4 attend our scheduled public meetings or  
5 submit your thoughts via e-mail or mail.  
6 Your voices will shape the future of flood  
7 risk management in our region.

8 In closing, I urge each of you to  
9 participate. Together, we can forge a  
10 resilient future for those who are affected  
11 by the Pearl River Basin and those who rely  
12 on its many benefits. Thank you.

13 MR. SHAW: Okay. Get our presentation  
14 right back up and be ready to go. Okay.  
15 Thank you, Madam Mayor. We've got a few more  
16 government officials we'd like to recognize.  
17 Senator Jason Barrett. Thank you, sir.  
18 Representative Becky Curry. Thank you,  
19 ma'am. Representative Ken Morgan. Thank  
20 you, sir. And Senator Andy Berry. Thank  
21 you. All right. Anyone else?

22 Okay. All right. So we've got a  
23 presentation that we're going to provide for  
24 everybody. When we finish with that  
25 presentation, one of the things we have is

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1 we've got a microphone set up. We most  
2 definitely want to hear from you, the public,  
3 any questions or concerns that you might  
4 have. When we finish the presentation, we'll  
5 just ask that if you would come up to the  
6 microphone, state your name please, and then  
7 express your concern. And so to make things  
8 kind of go in an orderly fashion, we've got a  
9 few rules of engagement which you can see  
10 here. I would ask you please wait to be  
11 recognized. Speaking time so that everybody  
12 can have an opportunity to speak, we would  
13 like to have no more than three minutes if  
14 you will, per question. And then please use  
15 respectful language.

16 And so if for some reason we can't get  
17 to all the questions or if there's something  
18 that you'd be more comfortable putting in  
19 writing, there's multiple ways that can  
20 happen. You can do it as a -- there's an  
21 e-mail address right there. There are  
22 comment cards when you first came in  
23 downstairs that those comment cards, you can  
24 fill those out and then you can also use the  
25 US Postal Service and send in your concern

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1 that way as well.

2 So why is this important? Well,  
3 everything that we're doing here is to  
4 satisfy the National Environmental Policy  
5 Act. NEPA is what you'll hear us talk about  
6 it, but it's to satisfy that, we have to  
7 document the process by which we go through  
8 and the public input is very important. It's  
9 something that we need, and we want to  
10 capture.

11 All right. And with that I'm going to  
12 turn it over to Ms. Colosimo to talk about  
13 our purpose. Just pick it up and hold it to  
14 your mouth. There's switch, go ahead.

15 MS. COLOSIMO: Hello. Oh, look at that.  
16 Thank you for the guidance.

17 As said, I'm Robyn Colosimo and I'm the  
18 Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for  
19 Civil Works in the Assistant Secretary of the  
20 Army for Civil Projects Office. Now, what's  
21 that mean? It's a mouthful, but essentially  
22 it's a small office where the policy  
23 oversight of my boss, Mr. Connor, of the  
24 Corps Civil Works Program occurs. Right. So  
25 Mr. Conner is one of six assistant

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1 secretaries of the Army and he is a Biden  
2 policy official. I am career, and my job is  
3 to help in that oversight and I do that with  
4 my partner, Eric Bush, who's in the Corps of  
5 Engineers, and you'll hear more about that.

6 It's really important that we're here  
7 today to hear from you. I want to thank all  
8 of you in advance for your time and your  
9 passion and sharing with us your thoughts on  
10 where we are in this important process. Hear  
11 from everybody, want to make sure we get all  
12 those comments in both verbally and written.  
13 So please know we value that.

14 This process has been guided by the  
15 scoping meetings we had in May, work that's  
16 been done prior times and under with Rankin  
17 Hinds and even by the Corps, but it's  
18 particularly guided by direction my boss gave  
19 to the core and how to move forward to try  
20 and come to a solution that we can address  
21 with implementing authorities that already  
22 exist. That's really important, right?  
23 There's a variety of authorities that we can  
24 leverage to resolve flooding, but it was also  
25 important to know that money was set aside to

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1           implement a project, if we can find an  
2           implementable project, to resolve these  
3           problems that start in Jackson with  
4           bipartisan infrastructure money that was set  
5           aside for Jackson to implement this project.  
6           What the work has happened to date since we  
7           did our scoping sessions, it encompasses  
8           really important updated modeling. It builds  
9           on these prior studies, including peer  
10          reviews that were completed by the Corps,  
11          Rank Hinds and others.

12                    And what you're going to hear today a  
13                    bit more about is the outlining of  
14                    alternatives that can be implemented within  
15                    those current authorities. In all cases,  
16                    it's imperative that any project we seek to  
17                    implement dovetails with current investments  
18                    going on with Jackson, but is responsive to  
19                    legislation, including legislation that talks  
20                    about any potential downstream impacts.  
21                    Right. I know those are front and center of  
22                    mind here. It's equally important to know  
23                    that we're aware of your concerns. I want to  
24                    understand them better. But about water  
25                    supply, reliable water supply, both for your

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1 businesses and your community. It's also  
2 true that I know that we're concerned about  
3 bank sloughing and those kinds of things. We  
4 want to talk about what this project might  
5 mean for Jackson and how it may or may not  
6 implicate any concerns in your community. So  
7 with that said, I'm looking forward to this  
8 conversation.

9 MR. SHAW: Mr. Bush?

10 MR. BUSH: Thank you, Tom.

11 First of all, thank you all for coming  
12 out tonight to take your time to share with  
13 us your views, your comments, your questions.  
14 That's a very important part of our  
15 processes, as Tom has already stated.

16 I'll introduce myself again. My name is  
17 Eric Bush. I'm the chief of planning and  
18 policy for the Corps of Engineers at our  
19 headquarters. And one of my responsibilities  
20 is to provide technical and policy advice to  
21 my boss, the Chief of Engineers, Lieutenant  
22 General Scott Spellmon; and also to the  
23 Secretary himself, Mr. Connor, through  
24 Ms. Colosimo.

25 So, as you all know that we're part of a

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1 public process right now, but I do want to  
2 make a few points here to explain the  
3 importance of your participation in this  
4 process. From my perspective, this is the  
5 most important part of our decision process.  
6 We put a draft report out there now, and we  
7 need to hear your views and comments, and  
8 we'll take all of those comments into  
9 consideration as we move ahead to finalizing  
10 our Environmental Impact Statement. And that  
11 will include additional evaluations that we  
12 decide to undertake as a result of comments  
13 we've received in these public meetings.  
14 Next slide, please.

15 All right. So I'll just start with a  
16 very important point. And this project,  
17 although we're very aware of the concerns  
18 downstream of Jackson, this project is about  
19 flood protection in the Jackson area. That's  
20 what it was authorized for. And so when we  
21 talk about flood protection in the Corps of  
22 Engineers, we use terms like flood damage  
23 reduction and flood risk reduction. But what  
24 it really is about is reducing human  
25 suffering, because if you think about the

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1 impacts of floods on people's jobs,  
2 livelihoods, properties, their homes, you  
3 know, those are devastating events that we  
4 have a mission in the Corps of Engineers to  
5 try to help with and ameliorate those  
6 conditions. Through our process we evaluate  
7 a range of alternative plans, which you're  
8 going to hear about the alternatives that  
9 we've evaluated tonight and get an  
10 opportunity to ask questions and make  
11 comments. It's also important for me to  
12 point out we do this in partnership. We have  
13 a nonfederal partner for this project, the  
14 Rankin Hinds Flood Control District  
15 represented here tonight by Mr. Turner.

16 And I'll also add that they've already  
17 done a great amount of technical work, some  
18 of which we are still utilizing in our  
19 decision process.

20 Another important point is that the  
21 project is already authorized by Congress.  
22 Now, that's a very important action that has  
23 already occurred in our process here. And so  
24 that -- implementing the project that was  
25 authorized by Congress is subject to



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1           determinations that Mr. Connor is going to  
2           make as a result of completing this  
3           environmental impact statement.

4           I'll also add here that the  
5           administration and Congress have set aside  
6           funds to initiate design and construction  
7           activities for flood protection project in  
8           Jackson after our required evaluations have  
9           been completed.

10          And finally, you know, as Robyn pointed  
11          out, her very explicit direction we received  
12          from Mr. Connor himself, we are preparing an  
13          Environmental Impact Statement to inform you,  
14          the public, and also the agencies that have a  
15          role in implementing the civil works process  
16          project. And we are in the middle of that  
17          public process right now, that public comment  
18          period. That initiated in June, it completes  
19          on August 6. So we're right in the middle of  
20          that comment period right now.

21          And so I want to thank you all again for  
22          allowing me to be here and for you all coming  
23          out tonight to share your comments and  
24          questions. And we'll be happy to take your  
25          questions and try to answer those questions

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1 at the conclusion of the briefing.

2 Now, I'll turn the presentation over to  
3 Mr. Turner.

4 MR. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Bush.

5 I'm going to give a little background.  
6 Some of you are probably familiar with as far  
7 as what we're dealing with in Jackson and  
8 what the Pearl River is about. As many of  
9 you are aware, of course, Jackson has had  
10 flooding since its origination, and as  
11 Jackson grew the flooding became more and  
12 more difficult to the point of where in the  
13 1960s the Corps came in and constructed  
14 levees, which I'll mention a little bit  
15 later, but it's flooded regularly.

16 In 1979, I believe you all had a  
17 significant flood here as well in '79. We  
18 had our flood of record where Interstate 55  
19 was under water, downtown was under water,  
20 the wastewater treatment plant went under  
21 water and put raw sewage coming down to y'all  
22 and communities below you for almost a year.

23 Since that time, of course, there's been  
24 other floods, '82 and '83. And then more  
25 recently as 2020 and 2022, we had floods.

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1           The 2020 flood was actually the third flood  
2           of record and would have been dramatically  
3           worse, but for the fact that the Ross Barnett  
4           Reservoir was extremely low. It was lowered  
5           to a purpose of trying to kill invasive plant  
6           species, so it had some flood storage  
7           capacity that it wouldn't normally hold. And  
8           that ended up helping a lot, even though it  
9           was still a record flood at the time.

10           So we've been dealing with flooding, as  
11           everyone has, and we've been trying to find  
12           solutions for many years. As I mentioned, in  
13           the '60s the Corps came in and constructed  
14           levees. They also channelized the river.  
15           They took the area right across from downtown  
16           and built about a three mile straight  
17           channel, and then they also dredged out above  
18           and below that. Unfortunately, as I  
19           mentioned, in '79 we still had a significant  
20           flood, and that was over top. As you can see  
21           from this picture, that is north. The top of  
22           that picture is the levee beam over top,  
23           that's right there and that's Herrin Gear  
24           Chevrolet, some of you all know that area.  
25           And that bottom is Interstate 55. Just north

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1 of that is where it went under water. Next  
2 slide, please.

3 So since that time, since '79, other  
4 state agencies were trying to find solutions.  
5 Ultimately, in the early 2000s, Rankin Hinds  
6 Flood Control got involved to help find  
7 solutions because prior efforts, some of you  
8 may be familiar with what was called Shoccoe  
9 Dry Dam, which is a dam, a dry dam north of  
10 the reservoir, 60,000 plus acre design, but  
11 it was shot down by locals who were concerned  
12 that they were going to flood. And then  
13 later, a levee plan was proposed that went  
14 from the reservoir south below downtown,  
15 which was also shot down by folks downstream  
16 through the legislative process. So there  
17 hasn't been a solution in all these years.  
18 We're still trying to find one.

19 Ultimately, a project evolved over the  
20 years to this, what you folks call One Lake.  
21 And the Rankin Hinds folks entered into a  
22 what they call Section 211 Agreement with the  
23 Corps of Engineers to allow us to prepare the  
24 Environmental Impact Statement and look at  
25 alternatives and a feasibility study. We

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1 began that in '12-'13, finished a draft EIS  
2 in 2018, which we conducted a public  
3 commenting process for that. Some of you may  
4 have even attended those meetings. And then  
5 we submitted it to the Corps of Engineers in  
6 2022. That is where they took off and  
7 started their work. And as you'll hear  
8 tonight, what the results of their efforts  
9 have been in collaboration with Rankin Hinds.  
10 Next slide, please.

11 One of the things that we also deal with  
12 in Jackson is we have a lot of tributaries  
13 that have flash flooding, particularly on the  
14 Jackson side of the river with the slope of  
15 these creeks that flash regularly. And so  
16 we're also working on projects locally within  
17 the County and the City that they're trying  
18 to work out tributary issues. I know that's  
19 less of a concern to y'all, but it's part of  
20 the issue that folks have to look at when  
21 we're talking about flooding in the Jackson  
22 area.

23 So there's several projects throughout  
24 the metropolitan area that are being worked  
25 on, millions of dollars trying to fix the

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1 flash flooding projects as well. Next slide,  
2 please.

3 So the purpose of this project is  
4 outlined in Water Resources Development Act  
5 2007 Order 3104 and prior authorizations,  
6 which basically, as we stated here, finding  
7 flood control, flood risk management for the  
8 metropolitan Jackson area. That is the  
9 focus. Rankin Hinds authority also  
10 (unintelligible) within that range.

11 And, of course, as you hear coming up,  
12 that goes beyond just the metropolitan area  
13 when you're looking at alternatives, but that  
14 is the purpose of need. And it comes from  
15 the fact that north of the Ross Barnett  
16 Reservoir, that water basin, of course, when  
17 it floods, comes down through the reservoir  
18 and it comes into the metropolitan Jackson  
19 area, is not a flood control reservoir. They  
20 have to let water out and it comes into an  
21 area that is confined, more constrained  
22 because of development and other reasons, and  
23 it causes flooding throughout the Jackson  
24 area. The floodplain is not as wide as it  
25 would otherwise be.

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1           As I mentioned, you know, we have both  
2           interstates, we have Lakeland Drive, which  
3           can flood. We have four hospitals in  
4           Flowood, which are threatened by these  
5           floods. We have thousands of homes and  
6           businesses. Downtown Jackson, south of  
7           Jackson, are all vulnerable to flooding. And  
8           a lot of these homes and businesses, on an  
9           annual basis, have to pack up their stuff and  
10          get ready to move at a regular because of the  
11          frequent flooding.

12           In addition, these homes in the north  
13          and south of downtown Jackson side, many of  
14          those are environmental justice communities,  
15          meaning they're minority or low income, and  
16          they flood first. They're the first ones to  
17          flood. And these homes, you know, get water  
18          creeping up the street, they have to decide  
19          when they see those rain coming, whether or  
20          not they have to pack up and leave, whether  
21          it's going to actually flood their homes or  
22          not. And that becomes a real challenge.

23           In addition, a lot of these communities  
24          have over 50 percent rental properties. So  
25          it's not easy to find solutions that can work

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1 that also account for those dynamics  
2 associated with that. Next slide.

3 MR. SHAW: All right, thank you, sir.  
4 So, at this time, I'm going to talk about the  
5 USACE activities, things that are ongoing  
6 right now.

7 It was mentioned that the Corps of  
8 Engineers works under authorization, and  
9 Section 3104 is the actual authorization for  
10 us. And it basically stated that the  
11 secretary is authorized to construct the NED,  
12 which is the National Economic Development  
13 plan; the LPP, which is the Locally Preferred  
14 Plan, or some combination thereof. Some  
15 combination thereof is an important concept,  
16 because as we go through the presentation,  
17 you will hear it mentioned as CTO. And what  
18 that really means is that we look at  
19 different features between those alternates,  
20 and we are able to pick those that either  
21 have reduced impacts or lower cost or greater  
22 benefits.

23 So the challenge there that the  
24 secretary put on the Corps of Engineers was,  
25 number one, to identify that National



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1 Economic Development Plan, to compare the  
2 levels of flood protection for the various  
3 alternates, and then assess the environmental  
4 acceptability and technical feasibility of  
5 those alternates.

6 So one of the things that we would like  
7 to communicate to you is the study area is  
8 the area that Congress authorized us to look  
9 at. And so that constitutes Rankin and Hinds  
10 Counties; the cities of Jackson, Flowood,  
11 Pearl, and Richland. You can see there's  
12 numerous tributaries that are included in  
13 that area. And so that's represented by --  
14 there is a yellow circle that is shown  
15 graphically here, and that represents the  
16 study area. That's what I just described.

17 The other area is what's known as the  
18 project area. And the project area is the  
19 area that we're actually going to be working,  
20 if you will, work in the project. And that  
21 begins at the Ross Barnett reservoir and goes  
22 just south of Byram. And so this would be  
23 limited to the area where the proposed  
24 actions would be implemented.

25 And the last thing I would mention is

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1           there is this trapezoid or this kind of a  
2           green rectangle there that that is  
3           representing an area by which, when the  
4           project, if implemented, would be effective  
5           from a hydrological standpoint.

6           I failed to mention one other thing. As  
7           Mr. Turner mentioned earlier, there was a  
8           slide that showed local work that was being  
9           done by others with respect to the  
10          tributaries. From the hydrology and  
11          hydraulics standpoint, our modelers utilized  
12          the actual rain on the grid that would fall  
13          within those tributaries. That has to be  
14          considered when you're performing the models  
15          for the study area. And so we've been  
16          working with those folks that are undertaking  
17          the work in the tribs, and we're trying to  
18          account for that in every way.

19          So the alternatives that are actually  
20          under evaluation is broken into two parts  
21          here. One is the work that was done by the  
22          nonfederal interest, Rankin Hinds is a part  
23          of that '22, that 2022 report. And that  
24          includes three alternates. Alternate A,  
25          which was a nonstructural selection;

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1           Alternate B, which was the levees plan that  
2           was proposed back in 2007. 'And then the  
3           Alternate C, which was the locally preferred  
4           plan.

5                        So the first two were basically removed  
6           from consideration for a number of reasons.

7                        The last one, the locally preferred  
8           plan, includes a significant amount of  
9           channel improvement and then a weir, a new  
10          weir for the purposes of water supply and to  
11          create the lake, if you will. And then it  
12          also had a levee plan where some levees were  
13          added, and I'll show you those in just a  
14          minute.

15                       And then so, since the secretary's  
16          direction, we worked closely and collaborated  
17          with the Rankin Hinds team, and we've  
18          basically come up with a modified,  
19          nonstructured plan, which we call A1. We've  
20          got -- I mentioned the combination thereof  
21          plans earlier. That's an Alternate D, which  
22          is the combination that we'll speak of in  
23          just a minute, but it includes a weir. And  
24          then Alternate E, which is basically the same  
25          as Alternate D., but there is no weir

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1 included.

2 Okay. And so the details with respect  
3 to Alternate A1, the evaluation is done in  
4 the 25 year floodplain, and any structures  
5 identified within that 25 year floodplain,  
6 actions would need to be taken there as a  
7 part of that alternate. And so if the  
8 structures -- if the properties themselves  
9 are residential, the thing that would happen  
10 is that they would have to be elevated. If  
11 they're within that identified area of that  
12 25 year floodplain, they would have to be  
13 elevated. And to ensure that they're taken  
14 out of the floodplain, they're actually  
15 elevated to the hundred year level. So  
16 that's the level of protection they would  
17 actually receive. If they're nonstructural,  
18 then they would undergo dry flood proofing to  
19 protect them.

20 One other possibility there is voluntary  
21 property acquisition. And the thing that's  
22 pretty important about that is if there is  
23 that acquisition, then any places that are  
24 acquired then become green spaces. They are  
25 no longer allowed to have residents there or

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1           whatever.

2                       And so the results of that, that 25 year  
3 floodplain identified 143 structures total  
4 that are within that floodplain. Of those,  
5 you can see that 81 were residences and then  
6 the balance was nonresidential. So the H and  
7 H model, as I mentioned earlier, did include  
8 the rainfall on the tribs as well as on the  
9 Pearl River.

10                   The Locally Preferred Plant, that was  
11 one of the alternates considered. That's the  
12 one that was originally developed by the  
13 Rankin Hinds team. A couple of important  
14 things there would include a nonstructural  
15 plan. It includes -- I mentioned the  
16 clearing and the lowering of the overbanks,  
17 the channel overbanks, to improve conveyance.  
18 When you get that 100 year event. We're not  
19 doing anything in the channel itself. It's  
20 in the overbanks. And so with the idea being  
21 that helps you at the 100 year flood because  
22 basically we've improved the ability of water  
23 to move downstream.

24                   It also included the demolition of the  
25 existing water supply weir at the fuel water

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1 treatment plant and included construction of  
2 a brand new weir. This weir would have been  
3 constructed at elevation 258 and then would  
4 include the upgrading of existing federal  
5 levee at the Savannah Street Wastewater  
6 Treatment Plant. And then it would have also  
7 required, because of the permanent pool that  
8 would have been created there, would have  
9 required some updates to interior drainage  
10 systems.

11 All right, back to the CTO. Okay, so  
12 the combination thereof, I mentioned we had  
13 two options. If you -- or two alternates, if  
14 you have D and E, and so both have common  
15 features and we'll go into those next.

16 Okay. So they both have improved  
17 conveyances through that overbank, the  
18 removal of some of the overbank materials,  
19 very similar to Alternate C. One of the key  
20 features that is different between it and C,  
21 Alternate B and Alternate C is the  
22 addition -- of the relocation of that weir.  
23 That weir is now moved upstream to just south  
24 of the I20 bridge, I believe. It's --  
25 because we're moving that weir up, then it

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1 has a reduced amount of excavation in  
2 comparison to Alternate C. And it also  
3 moved -- or moving that weir upstream, if you  
4 will, we avoid some known HTRW sites. And we  
5 ultimately should reduce the amount of  
6 mitigation required significantly.

7 The weir elevation that we -- in  
8 comparison to Alternate C, the weir is now at  
9 256 instead of elevation 258. So that's two  
10 feet lower.

11 The other thing that is similar to  
12 Alternate C is that this weir contains a low  
13 flow gate, which in periods of drought, they  
14 can open that gate up to ensure that water  
15 can continue to flow downstream. And it also  
16 includes a fish ladder so that species such  
17 as the sturgeon or whatever have the ability  
18 to move up and down that weir. They would  
19 not be prohibited.

20 I failed to mention one thing there.  
21 Alternate D, based on the current information  
22 we've got, is the likely potential National  
23 Economic Development Plan.

24 Alternate E is basically the same as D,  
25 except it does not have that weir and

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1           therefore would not require, I mean, it's no  
2           different than the run of the river now,  
3           other than it would still have the excavation  
4           of the overbanks, but it wouldn't change the  
5           way the channel runs in terms of low flow and  
6           for the aquatic species.

7           So this is one of the things that I  
8           would really like to focus in on for a  
9           moment. So what you're actually looking at,  
10          this is a -- it's a water surface elevation.  
11          And these lines represent the water surface  
12          elevation. On this side it represents the  
13          upstream, if you will. This side over here  
14          represents downstream with respect to the  
15          river. So we always compare any of our  
16          alternates against the without project. In  
17          other words, the condition as it currently  
18          is. The without project is this kind of blue  
19          line that runs right here. The with project  
20          is this line right here. I point this out  
21          for one reason here in particular, that five  
22          feet is five feet of reduction between the  
23          without project or current condition and with  
24          the project in place, that is basically the  
25          location of the weir with respect to upstream



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1 going downstream is about that point right  
2 there. A point of reference there was the  
3 Gallatin Street landfill. Richland Creek is  
4 here.

5 And then you'll notice there is a slight  
6 bit of what we would call inducement there.  
7 And the inducement there is about six inches  
8 with, I think, plus or minus three inches  
9 with respect to the accuracy of the model.  
10 And so the hydrological impacts, if you will  
11 resolve about five miles north of Monticello  
12 here. Our H and H modeling, that's what they  
13 show that there really will not be any  
14 discernible impacts once you get south of  
15 that point or downriver.

16 We also recognize that there's something  
17 that needs to happen that we will not, you  
18 know, we haven't done yet and that's the  
19 sedimentation model and that will occur in  
20 the next phase.

21 Okay. At this time, I'm going to ask  
22 Brandon to come up. He's going to start  
23 talking to the environmental side.

24 MR. DAVIS: Well, good afternoon, Madam  
25 Mayor. Thank you for the hospitality and

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1 giving me a tour around this place a little  
2 earlier, a beautiful place you have here.  
3 And to our public officials and first  
4 responders, thank you for your service for  
5 being here tonight. It's after 6:00 on a  
6 Thursday, supper time, so we appreciate you  
7 being here and your commitment helping us  
8 make this a better project.

9 I'm Brandon Davis. I'm your planning  
10 lead out of the Vicksburg District. Tonight,  
11 these next few slides, we're going to talk  
12 about the National Environmental Policy Act.  
13 NEPA is what I'll call it. I'm going to go  
14 through that, but I want to set the table on  
15 a couple of things.

16 We as the Corps of Engineers, we are a  
17 risk informed decision making organization.  
18 That's the type of planning we do. What that  
19 means is we're going to take the best  
20 information that we have available at the  
21 time. We're going to tag and put risk on  
22 that and we're going to continue to come back  
23 and visit to see are we doing what we need to  
24 be doing? Do we need to do something more  
25 along those lines? And that's really what

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1           it's about, taking the best information we  
2           have at the time, identifying and putting a  
3           risk with it and then moving forward. That's  
4           what we've done so far with the CIS. This is  
5           a draft. This is not a final. There are  
6           still some areas that need some improvement,  
7           and that's the reason we're here tonight,  
8           because we're relying on you guys to help us  
9           make this a better product.

10                    Another commitment I have to you is that  
11           I'm doing my best to answer your questions.  
12           I'm going to be honest with you, I'm not the  
13           best person to answer all these technical  
14           questions. I'm not that smart. But I do  
15           have subject matter experts in the room and  
16           downstairs that can help you with anything  
17           that you may have on the environmental side,  
18           economics, HTRW. So that's my commitment to  
19           you. I don't want you leaving here with  
20           questions. Things may come up as you move  
21           along and, you know, that's why we have this  
22           open comment period for you to get with us to  
23           help us. Again, we're relying on you in this  
24           process to help make it better again.

25                    Again, one of the good things about the

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1 NEPA process is that it's a method of holding  
2 the federal government accountable, checks  
3 and balances. And one of the requirements  
4 that we do with the NEPA process is allowing  
5 the public to comment and being involved in  
6 these type of -- in these type of exercises,  
7 which, again, is a benefit to us all because,  
8 you know, we're relying on you to help us  
9 make it better, and that's why we're here  
10 tonight.

11 So I want to go into the habitat  
12 mitigation, and then we're going to roll into  
13 a few more things. First thing on the  
14 habitat mitigation here is that what you're  
15 going to see is that we are not -- we have  
16 Alternative C and the CTO with Alternative D  
17 and E. You're not going to see the  
18 nonstructural Alternative A1 up there because  
19 we are assuming there's not going to be  
20 any -- not expected to have any reasonably  
21 foreseeable environmental impacts with those  
22 alternatives. So you're not going to see  
23 that on this slide here. But what you are  
24 seeing here for the Alternative C and the  
25 CTO, we're going to look at the acres that

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1 are impacted here, and then we're going to  
2 talk about the AAHUs, and we'll go into a  
3 little detail what that is.

4 So if we look at Alternative C, the  
5 river widening project, the Locally Preferred  
6 Plan, you can see the various types of  
7 habitats here, open water, bottomland,  
8 hardwood swamp, and you can see what the  
9 acres impacted are. You compare that to  
10 the -- what we're calling the CTO,  
11 Alternative D and Alternative E, you can see  
12 the reduction through each of the different  
13 habitat types.

14 I'm trying to make sure I've got my  
15 notes correct on this. So also, the second  
16 thing here that we're looking at here, we're  
17 looking at the AAHUs. AAHU is an Average  
18 Annual Habitat Unit, and that represents the  
19 function and the values of a particular  
20 habitat. So when we mitigate for land and  
21 projects in the Corps of Engineers, it's not  
22 going to be -- we're going to look at the  
23 functions that are lost, and it's not going  
24 to be a one to one acres that we look at.  
25 For an example, you know, Tupelo swamp, the

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1 value of Tupelo swamp being, you know,  
2 damaged or taken away, probably more than  
3 likely is going to hold more value than open  
4 land. So we have to look at that and we have  
5 to figure what the impacts are, and that's  
6 one of the ways that we go through the  
7 mitigation process.

8 Our terrestrial impacts were determined  
9 by running a certified Habitat Evaluation  
10 Process model HEP. This is completed by our  
11 nonfederal interest contractor who did a  
12 great job on that, and it's been presented in  
13 the EIS.

14 And also, I wanted to point out to you  
15 that our team is currently working on a  
16 mitigation plan, and that will be completed  
17 prior to the construction activities. The  
18 reason that's not completed is, again, it's  
19 part of the process. This is a draft. We  
20 need input for you. We also need direction  
21 from the secretary's office on what route are  
22 we going to go so we can make the final  
23 adjustments to that.

24 So this next slide here, threatened  
25 endangered species slide. In the table

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1           you're going to see there are eight species  
2           of concern in the study area. It should be  
3           noted again, like we talked about on the  
4           mitigation slide, Alternative A1 is not  
5           present here. We're not expecting any  
6           reasonable, foreseeable impacts to a  
7           threatened endangered species with this  
8           alternative. Our team has worked really  
9           close and collaborated with our sister  
10          agency, US Fish and Wildlife Services, to  
11          making the determinations that we have here.  
12          We're going to talk about those  
13          determinations right now. But I wanted to  
14          point that out. This wasn't something that  
15          our people just decided what the  
16          determination is going to be. We have had  
17          collaboration with other federal agencies  
18          while we're doing this.

19                 So, for example, here we'll look at the  
20          Gulf sturgeon in Alternative C. You see LAA,  
21          and then you come down on the Northern  
22          Long-eared Bat and you see NLAA. So what  
23          does that mean? The LAA is likely to  
24          adversely affect, but not likely to  
25          jeopardize the continuing existence of. And

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1           whereas, the NLA is not likely to adversely  
2           affect. Now, what you're going to know is,  
3           is that the impacts for Alternative C and the  
4           alternative of the CTO are the same. And the  
5           reason behind that is, is like -- it's  
6           assumed that, like Alternative C and the  
7           construction of the CTO and weir could likely  
8           eliminate some riverine habitat. We are very  
9           familiar with that and we understand that.

10                   A velocity analysis like has been  
11           conducted for Alternative C, is being  
12           conducted to better understand the potential  
13           impact of the CTO on the riverine system.  
14           Very important that we understand how would  
15           that impact Gulf Sturgeon and other type of  
16           species that could be impacted.

17                   Alternative E, the CTO without the weir,  
18           the impacts are slightly different. But you  
19           can see there are some impacts that we need  
20           to talk about. One I want to point out here  
21           would be for the Ringed Sawback Turtle and  
22           for the Pearl Map Turtle, we're showing LAA  
23           on those, potential for an impact. And the  
24           reason being is that even though there is not  
25           a weir there, they're still going to require



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1           some excavation to the banks. And those  
2           turtles have been known to rely on those  
3           banks, so there could be a potential impact  
4           to those species.

5           A biological assessment was prepared and  
6           has been submitted to the US Fish and  
7           Wildlife Service to read the determinations  
8           on that. So that consultation is ongoing and  
9           anticipated to be completed by the release of  
10          the final EIS. But again, also it goes back  
11          to understanding the path forward with this  
12          exercise.

13          So cultural resources, you're going to  
14          notice that all the alternatives have some  
15          type of potential impact to cultural  
16          resources. Cultural resources are everywhere  
17          around you, and it's a very broad array of  
18          things. Like this building that we're  
19          setting in tonight, beautiful building, is a  
20          cultural resource. So there's a lot that we  
21          have to look at. It could be graves, it  
22          could be potential historical findings, you  
23          know, buildings like this. There's a lot  
24          that we have to look at on cultural  
25          resources. Our team has done a fantastic

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1 job. Our subject matter experts are some of  
2 the best in the Corps of Engineers. We're  
3 currently negotiating a programmatic  
4 agreement with the state historic  
5 preservation office, tribal nations, and  
6 other stakeholders we have as well.

7 So what is a PA? Excuse me. What is a  
8 PA? Periodic agreement -- programmatic  
9 agreement, I'm sorry, thinking of something  
10 else. But a programmatic agreement is a plan  
11 that we lay out the steps needed to take to  
12 address any type of impact. So kind of  
13 the -- if we know that we're going to be  
14 working in an area that has a lot of cultural  
15 resources, what are the steps that we have to  
16 take to either avoid or mitigate for that.

17 Again, our team is having regular  
18 consultation meetings. They actually had one  
19 yesterday. They're close to reaching an  
20 agreement and that PA is expected to be  
21 signed before the record of decision is  
22 signed on the development draft EIS.

23 So the next slide we're going to talk  
24 about tribal nations. The same falls  
25 underneath the NEPA umbrella. This is part

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1 of the Section 106 requirements that we have  
2 with cultural resources. It's a policy of  
3 the federal government to consult with our  
4 federally recognized tribal nations and  
5 governments. And that is what we've done.  
6 Currently, there are no tribal lands or  
7 rights that have been identified, but we're  
8 continuing to have consultation with these  
9 groups in case there's some type of  
10 identified protected travel resource that we  
11 need to work through the process on.

12 So environmental justice, this is a very  
13 important topic form that the Obama and Biden  
14 administration has done a fantastic job of  
15 making sure is being identified and that  
16 these groups of individuals aren't forgotten  
17 about. So what is environmental justice?  
18 For those that don't know, it's really the  
19 means of just treatment and meaningful  
20 involvement of all people, regardless of  
21 their income, backgrounds, race, origins,  
22 disabilities, things of that nature.  
23 Everyone needs to be involved. It's not that  
24 we as the Corps or our nonfederal interest,  
25 we find cheap land where low income housing

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1           may be and we go and we take that and then we  
2           develop projects on that. That's not how  
3           things are operated. Everyone's involved to  
4           make sure that everyone has a voice.

5                    As you can see for the no action  
6           alternative here on the slide, in the 100  
7           year floodplain there are less than 800  
8           structures that are in EJ areas of concern.  
9           The actual number is 773. In the  
10          nonstructural Alt A1 plan, there are 143  
11          structures that make up EJ concerns.

12                   And then one thing I want to point out  
13          that I've told all the other groups that I  
14          feel like is an elephant in the room is this  
15          bullet right here about structure inducements  
16          occurring from the Alt C and the CTO. As you  
17          can see on the CTO, it's showing 52  
18          structures. That's not 52 new structures  
19          that are getting wet. These are 52  
20          structures that are already getting wet as a  
21          result of the existing conditions right now.  
22          So what does that mean? It means that  
23          depending on the alternative that is  
24          selected, either way those 52 structures are  
25          going to have to have some type of a

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1 nonstructural measure, either being raised  
2 with elevation or flood proofing of some  
3 things of that nature. So just want to point  
4 that out. I probably should have reworded  
5 that and made that a little clearer. Just  
6 want to let you know that is not 52 new  
7 structures. It's 52 that already exists.  
8 But again, we'll have to follow the proper  
9 procedures on nonstructural means, depending  
10 on whatever alternative is selected by the  
11 secretary's office.

12 And the final thing I want to relay on  
13 the environmental justice slide is that our  
14 comment period -- I'm sorry about that -- our  
15 comment period stops or ends for this, I  
16 believe, 6 August for the NEPA side, but the  
17 environmental justice and outreach will  
18 continue. We have two or three meetings that  
19 are set throughout the next coming months to  
20 meet with environmental communities and  
21 individuals that may be affected by this. We  
22 want to be able to grant them the  
23 opportunity, beyond just these meetings here,  
24 to ask any questions that they may have about  
25 the project.

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1           So the next slide here is on recreation.  
2           I want to point out that this is not a  
3           recreation project. The Corps of Engineers  
4           does not have the authority to justify a  
5           project off of recreation. The way our  
6           regulations read is that 50 percent or more  
7           of the benefits of a project has to come from  
8           a mission, in this case being flood risk  
9           management. So once you have 50 percent or  
10          more of your benefits from that mission, then  
11          you can tack on any recreational side. For  
12          this project, and we'll see in a moment,  
13          there's roughly \$5 million worth of  
14          recreational benefits associated with this  
15          project that come from boating, fishing,  
16          sightseeing. The team used unit date values  
17          and updated that to come up with those  
18          numbers. But I thought it's important to lay  
19          that out.

20                 But also it's important to talk about  
21          some of the so-whats behind this as well. So  
22          you notice that what has benefits. No action  
23          and Alternative A. Obviously the no action  
24          had no added benefits. Alternative A, the  
25          one we've talked about being the

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1 nonstructural plan wouldn't expect to see any  
2 type of benefits on recreation, but you  
3 obviously would have on Alternative C and  
4 then the CTO. But, you know, that's water  
5 based recreation, shoreline based recreation,  
6 things of that nature.

7 But what you also see on -- the truth of  
8 the matter is for C and the CTO, you are  
9 seeing potential impacts at LeFleur's State  
10 Park. Now, the area that is of question of  
11 potential impacts are areas that are already  
12 flooding and inaccessible. And I don't mean  
13 to sound caustic when I say that, but it's  
14 just a point out of where the land is. It's  
15 nothing that what we can tell is affected by,  
16 you know, walking trails or anything of that  
17 nature. It's more of a swamp land. But  
18 still, though, with that being said, we've  
19 continued to work with, depending on the  
20 alternative selected, we will continue to  
21 work with the park service if we were to see  
22 any damages on that and mitigate the way we  
23 needed to mitigate that. Mitigation could be  
24 additional walking trails, things of that  
25 nature. I don't quite know what that would

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1 be, but the bottom line is if something  
2 that's being some type of an impact on the  
3 recreation of LeFleur's Bluff, because I know  
4 that's very important to a lot of our  
5 citizens up in the Jackson area, and maybe  
6 you as well, if you travel up there; but, you  
7 know, it's not just something that we're just  
8 going to let it flood and walk away, that  
9 there's going to be something done about  
10 that.

11 So, you know, the goal obviously is  
12 regardless of what alternative we have with  
13 recreation, with environmental, you want to  
14 avoid, you want to minimize any impacts, but  
15 we'll obviously have to mitigate if  
16 absolutely necessary on that.

17 So the economics is one that -- that's a  
18 lot of numbers up here, and I don't -- well,  
19 this slide is a summary. The next slide is a  
20 lot of numbers, and I want to be as clear as  
21 I can so to avoid any confusion on this. So  
22 I'm going to go through this for a second and  
23 try to make this as elementary as possible.  
24 I'm not talking down to you. I'm just trying  
25 to lay it out in a way that's easier to



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1 understand because it's not obvious most of  
2 the time.

3 So what you're going to notice on the  
4 cost here, and we're just going to focus on  
5 Alternative D with the weir, it's the first  
6 one that I'm looking at. You see the project  
7 cost ranges from 487 million to \$655 million.  
8 You may be asking yourself, well, why is  
9 there such a gap there. Well, we had to add  
10 something risk to that. And because, again,  
11 risk informed decision making, and that's  
12 what we did. Our engineers work together to  
13 come up with what they thought the numbers  
14 might be and what the values might be. One  
15 way that we also are checking ourselves  
16 through checks and balances is these numbers  
17 are currently going through an agency  
18 technical review process. Independent eyes  
19 are looking at that. The individual that  
20 actually is reviewing that is from the Corps  
21 of Engineers Economic Cost Center of  
22 expertise out of Walla Walla, Washington.  
23 That is their job. That is their expertise,  
24 is handling cost engineering. And he's a  
25 very tough reviewer that's worked for me in

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1 the past on some projects. Like I said, he's  
2 independent, but they're looking at these  
3 numbers to see if anything needs to be added,  
4 taken away, et cetera.

5 So our charge from the secretary's  
6 office was to analyze an array of  
7 alternatives and to determine an NED plan and  
8 help the secretary make an informed decision  
9 with the information that we have. Do we  
10 have all the information that we need? Well,  
11 we think we do, but we do know that what we  
12 have we're vertically aligned with, but if  
13 there's more that we need to add or more that  
14 we need to look at, well, then again, that's  
15 what we're going to do. So we just wanted to  
16 point that out.

17 But when you're trying to determine what  
18 an NED plan is, there are a couple of things  
19 that you look at up on the front side. One  
20 is you're trying to determine what's going to  
21 give you the most benefits, the most bang for  
22 your buck, and then you're also going to look  
23 at what the benefit to cost ratio is. You  
24 want that to be above NET or above one.

25 So, an example right here, we want to

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1 maximize our net benefits. It's going to be  
2 a little more obvious in the next slide what  
3 I mean by maximizing your benefits, but the  
4 benefit to cost ratio, breaking this down for  
5 you, what that 1.4 right there, that 1.1  
6 means is that so I'm going to take what my  
7 benefits are, that's derived by my economists  
8 and engineers. I'm going to divide that by  
9 the cost of the project was given to us by  
10 the engineers and we're going to come up with  
11 a number, simple arithmetic, but it comes up  
12 in this case here at 1.4. So what that means  
13 in simplified terms, is for every \$1 that's  
14 invested by the federal government, in  
15 theory, \$1.40 should be returned to the  
16 public. And you can see how it breaks out,  
17 1.1, 2.1. So you kind of get the idea of  
18 what that means.

19 So again, a lot of numbers here, so I  
20 wanted to break that down to make sure that I  
21 was clear with what all this means. So you  
22 have your alternatives here. You have  
23 Alternative D, you have Alternative E, and  
24 your nonstructural alternatives. And you're  
25 going to notice we still have the low and the

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1 high cost. Again, that's going through  
2 review right now to see where we're at, if we  
3 need to make any adjustments on that. Again,  
4 the big difference on Alternative D and  
5 Alternative E are going to be if you look at  
6 the benefits here. So, for example, on  
7 Alternative D, you're looking at 27.7 in  
8 benefits versus -- compared to 22.4. That's  
9 the \$5 million in the recreation benefits  
10 that I was talking about by having the weir  
11 in place of adding for various boating and  
12 camping and things of that nature as well.  
13 So that's one of the differences you see  
14 there.

15 But getting back to the NED plan, in  
16 addition to -- let me go ahead and say this  
17 first. So I'm looking at my annualized net  
18 benefits here, and I see 8.2, 6.8. I believe  
19 that's what that number is, but you get what  
20 I'm talking about. So when you compare the  
21 1.4 to that, you actually have multiple  
22 projects that could be considered an NED plan  
23 based on determination of the cost. So in  
24 this case here, Alternative D could be the  
25 NED plan, Alternative E, CTO without weir

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1           could be an NED plan if you look at that  
2           number. Then also your nonstructural plan  
3           could also be part of your NED plan. So  
4           again, following the guidance that was given  
5           to us from the secretary's office providing  
6           an array of alternatives to be looked at and  
7           determined what is going to be selected. But  
8           you also have to look at in addition to the  
9           NED, you look at the implementability --  
10          ability to implement, sorry for the big word,  
11          tongue tied. So are you able to, with this  
12          project, either one of these projects, even  
13          though it might could be considered an NED  
14          plan, are you able to implement, plus other  
15          things have to be taken into the factor.

16                 Also the nonstructural, are you going to  
17          have a participation rate to -- for the  
18          nonstructural to take place. In some places  
19          in what you're seeing you're seeing about a  
20          50 percent participation rate on the  
21          nonstructural. Some people, they're not  
22          going to want to be involved. So that's  
23          factors. And we don't know what that actual  
24          number would be for this project, but that  
25          just gives you an idea, other things have to

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1 be considered when you're trying to determine  
2 that.

3 So, finally, the last slide here, and I  
4 know this is something that is near and dear  
5 to some of you in the room, and I appreciate  
6 that as well, is the hazardous, toxic and  
7 radiological waste as part of this project.  
8 The nonfederal sponsor's done a great job of  
9 going through various phases of tests, but  
10 once we know what the alternative select is  
11 going to be, then there's possibility that  
12 more analysis will have to be done.

13 Part of our regulation is, is the Corps  
14 of Engineers cannot build on a site that has  
15 some type of an HCRW concern. It'd have to  
16 be either excavated out, cleaned or avoid and  
17 minimized. So you can't have an issue where  
18 you're going to have some type of sewer  
19 seepage of creosote, or something along those  
20 lines that's going to impact the water or  
21 water supply. So that's something that has  
22 to be taken into account and will be once we  
23 know the path forward, if we need to do more  
24 analysis.

25 David Day is in the back of the room,

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1 he's a subject matter expert on the board for  
2 HCRW, so if you have additional questions on  
3 that, he'll be glad to talk with you about  
4 that.

5 Again, though, I appreciate your time.  
6 On behalf of me and my chief Troy Constance.  
7 We thank you for allowing us to be here  
8 tonight to present this information to you.  
9 And again, the questions, we're looking  
10 forward to that, but our subject matter  
11 experts are downstairs with the boards. So  
12 as you walk out, if you have something that's  
13 really on your mind, we hope that you'll stop  
14 and visit with us. So, thank you again.

15 MR. SHAW: Okay. Thank you, Brandon.

16 So that concludes the presentation  
17 portion of our meeting tonight. So we're now  
18 going to enter in a time where the public, we  
19 want your feedback. You've heard us say  
20 that. If you would please come up to the  
21 microphone, I would remind you of a couple  
22 things. Please limit your questions to about  
23 three minutes to allow anybody else and  
24 everybody to make a comment. If some of your  
25 questions are of a very technical nature,

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1 very detailed, as Brandon mentioned earlier,  
2 we do have subject matter experts that are  
3 here. When you came in, there were a bunch  
4 of study boards down there, those boards are  
5 where the subject matter experts will  
6 actually be. So if you have some very  
7 technical questions, there are opportunities  
8 to talk with those subject matter experts.  
9 We're video recording the public meeting. We  
10 have a transcriptionist who is actually doing  
11 court transcription, making transcripts, if  
12 you will. We want your comments either  
13 through the comment card, the project website  
14 with the e-mail address, or my physical mail.

15 So at this time, I want to go over where  
16 we're at with respect to the review period in  
17 our timeline today. So as you heard, the  
18 document, the draft EIS, the Environmental  
19 Impact Statement, went out for public review  
20 on 7 June. We will conclude the comment  
21 review period on the 6th of August. Next in  
22 line would be the addressing of those  
23 comments. So that's time for August and  
24 September, and scheduled for a notice of  
25 availability will be in October with a target



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1 for a final EIS in December. And then the  
2 secretary can take the action of his  
3 determination and a record of decision.

4 So at this time, I would just ask if you  
5 would like to offer your questions and  
6 comments, please do so. I would ask, keep in  
7 mind the three minutes, because we want to  
8 see if everybody can have an opportunity to  
9 speak. Okay, and I failed to mention one  
10 thing. You can go ahead and come to the mic.

11 There's a QR code down in the lower  
12 right hand corner, which will take you to the  
13 project website where you will see the videos  
14 from our public meetings. There will be  
15 project updates, the draft EIS, multiple  
16 things will be out there on that project  
17 website. So that's your easiest way to stay  
18 up to date on what's going on with the  
19 project. Yes, ma'am.

20 MS. CYNTHIA STEWART: Hi, thank you all  
21 for coming. My name is Cynthia Stewart. Our  
22 family has been in the area and farmed the  
23 same farm since the 1800s. Just a question,  
24 and y'all's slides are great, but I couldn't  
25 read some of them, so if I'm asking a

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1 question that was on one of the slides, I  
2 apologize. So how long is construction on C  
3 and CTO expected to take? And will during  
4 construction or after, raise or lower the  
5 Pearl River levels? Or is that a technical  
6 question?

7 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: So that's going to  
8 vary depending on (unintelligible), but  
9 normally we need just a little bit of period  
10 of about five years for implementation.

11 To answer your question, is it going to  
12 raise and lower, it's designed not to change  
13 the water surface elevations or any other  
14 effect downstream. It's lowering the water  
15 surface elevations above the weir in the area  
16 of Jackson.

17 MS. CYNTHIA STEWART: During  
18 construction too?

19 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: During  
20 construction, we intend to have no impacts.  
21 And so we have methods in which we manage  
22 that. Part of the contract requirements have  
23 those in place, it's rather complicated. We  
24 have to put some of the construction guides  
25 in there, but we consider flood events during

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1 construction and part of the contracts that  
2 we like, they have to have measures to  
3 address that.

4 MS. CYNTHIA STEWART: Thank you.

5 MR. SHAW: Thank you, ma'am. Yes, sir.

6 MR. KEN MORGAN: Thank you, sir. I'm  
7 Ken Morgan, state representative going on 19  
8 years in the House of Representatives and I  
9 served on the Committee Conservation and  
10 Water Resource and Chairman of the Forestry  
11 Committee. I've lived in Marion County,  
12 Mississippi all my life. I'm going on 73  
13 years old. All these settlements except down  
14 the river, they ain't coming down on mule and  
15 wagon, they come up the river. The John Ford  
16 home down in South Marion County; Columbia,  
17 Mississippi; Monticello, Mississippi, all the  
18 way to Jackson they had paddle wheelers  
19 coming up and down the river because they  
20 could. Me saying I was -- going on 73, I can  
21 remember back about 62 years ago, I was  
22 standing on the bluff of the river and looked  
23 down in October when I was squirrel hunting  
24 and I'd see the fish swimming. Them days is  
25 gone, been gone.

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1           Along with some of the problems of what  
2           happening in Hinds County, Hinds County has a  
3           failing system as far as their sewage system.  
4           And they know it's failing, but they hadn't  
5           made any attempt to treat -- re-energize it  
6           or build a new facility. And then they've  
7           had the water problems. We all know that  
8           because it was on the news.

9           Well, we kind of got shuffled in the mix  
10          that the people down south in Hinds County  
11          getting the brunt of the storm. And, you  
12          know, when they built the state capitol, the  
13          old capitol and the state capitol now today,  
14          which is built on the property where the old  
15          first penitentiary was, was all up the hill  
16          from the high school. They didn't go down in  
17          the floodplain and build facilities down  
18          there. Why? Because they knew it flooded.  
19          But when you get population moving in and on,  
20          you get realtors involved and they say, well,  
21          you can buy that man's property for a unique  
22          price because that was cotton and cornfields  
23          all around Ross Barnett Reservoir when it was  
24          built. The property owners that owned the  
25          property at that time couldn't go down and

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1 put any kind of structure down there or  
2 couldn't build a little boat ramp or anything  
3 to fish because the Reservoir Board had  
4 authority saying they couldn't do it. But  
5 then once the real estate people got involved  
6 in it, that \$300 acre land and everything  
7 else went up immensely. And it's pretty much  
8 controlled because I've asked several times,  
9 do y'all have a day operating procedure  
10 manual for the Ross Barnett Reservoir. They  
11 didn't know what I was talking about. The  
12 way that thing operates and been operating is  
13 over the telephone. What y'all done to the  
14 water this morning? Went down there and my  
15 boat's three foot below the mark from where I  
16 pull in and that kind of thing, but what we  
17 really wound up hurting is the people down in  
18 south Mississippi. From Hinds County our  
19 river has just went to pot. We can't  
20 straighten it out. I promise you. I know  
21 from my heart that it's probably 50 to 75  
22 yards wider than what it used to be. And you  
23 can't come from the Gulf Coast, where this is  
24 also going to affect some of the seafood  
25 industry down there if this happens and water

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1 gets pulled out, evaporation every day,  
2 nobody don't know how much that's going to  
3 take. But what was going on last year for  
4 the drought situation, we should have learned  
5 something from it.

6 But with that said, if we don't do  
7 something to -- right now to start trying to  
8 correct some of the problems we've had,  
9 because you can't get a 14 foot boat with a  
10 25 horse motor and leave down at Gulfport,  
11 Mississippi, and come up the Pearl River and  
12 make it to Jackson without getting out and  
13 toting that boat because we've got so little  
14 water to run through. You don't have a jet  
15 boat or something on there you're not going  
16 to make it.

17 I wasn't going to ask a bunch of  
18 questions. I just want to give you a little  
19 history of what was going on. And y'all can  
20 chew on that when you want to. The thing  
21 about it, it's happening, folks. It's not  
22 all just what's going on in Jackson at the  
23 reservoir. We got large timber companies  
24 that's coming out in 3 and 400 acre tracts of  
25 timber. And the timber industry has changed.

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1           If you don't have a big skidder and all, wet  
2           area and all to get the logs out, you're not  
3           going to get them to the mill. That's common  
4           sense. But if that skidder goes through a  
5           bubbling spring that's been there since God  
6           created dirt and packs it in about three or  
7           four trips through there, it quits floating.  
8           But when it rains, the sediment goes down to  
9           the first head of the spring of the water.  
10          Then it pushes it down to the creek, and then  
11          it pushes it to the river. And they tried  
12          some years and years ago down in the -- below  
13          Marion County toward the Louisiana line,  
14          picked all that stuff up and set it on the  
15          bank. And guess what? River come up and  
16          washed it all right back in.

17                 So I don't know what the answer is, but  
18                 I'm not sitting here doing nothing taking the  
19                 blame for something that Hinds County and  
20                 Rankin County is wanting to make money off of  
21                 in a real estate venture because once you put  
22                 a levee up there first thing they're going to  
23                 cover, oh, you're protected by the levee now,  
24                 the price of that property just went up. And  
25                 that's just common sense tell you that.

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1           Because I got some property at Lake Chotard  
2           in Warren County too, I deal with the levee  
3           over there. But with all that said, the  
4           headwater in Philadelphia, Mississippi where  
5           the Pearl River starts hasn't changed. It  
6           stayed the same, bless its heart. Because if  
7           you don't see what the Pearl River used to  
8           live like 62 years ago, you go up to  
9           Philadelphia and put a boat in the river and  
10          start down a little bit. Because those folks  
11          could paddle a six foot marsh down a public  
12          river and run trotlines and all fishing  
13          because the flow of the river was moving so  
14          slow it was like a little dead lake. Now,  
15          you take a ten foot boat aluminum boat and  
16          get in there and paddle half a mile you'd  
17          want to borrow a life restraint before you  
18          got through. Appreciate your time. If you  
19          got any questions (interruption in comments).

20                 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Yes, ma'am.

21                 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I truly thank you  
22          all for being here. I know you did US a  
23          special favor. This was not on your normal  
24          routine, and I thank you for giving us this  
25          time. And as you can see, there is a lot of



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1 interest.

2 But those -- we all know that this  
3 project began many years ago with the sole  
4 purpose of being a recreational housing  
5 development. After several tries and fails,  
6 it went quiet for a while until the Rankin  
7 Hinds County came together to call it a flood  
8 control project, enabling them to tap into  
9 federal funds. If this were truly a flood  
10 control project for the good of Jackson  
11 neighborhoods experiencing flooding from  
12 their many tributaries, it would make sense  
13 that this would be the first thing addressed  
14 and corrected in their neighborhoods and then  
15 work down to the lake area.

16 The idea of creating a lake and then  
17 working up to neighborhoods to try to solve  
18 their issues is completely backwards. The  
19 entire idea of the One Lake Plan is nothing  
20 but a scheme to get into the back door with  
21 federal monies in order to fund their  
22 development for the wealthy.

23 No river is exclusive to any one group,  
24 city, or state. Rivers belong to everyone,  
25 every community surrounding them. The only

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1 one having ultimate purview over natural  
2 lakes and rivers is the God that put them  
3 there. For one selfish group to discount  
4 every person, every community, everything  
5 downstream is wrong on every level. For one  
6 group to decide the fate of those in the 100  
7 miles below the project is inconscionable.  
8 Spending these years wasting your time,  
9 energy, and money by trying to call this  
10 development project -- this development a  
11 flood control project, as a taxpayer is  
12 infuriating. This time, money and effort  
13 would have been better spent by actually  
14 helping the neighborhoods in Jackson by  
15 dredging their channels, reconfiguring their  
16 drainage systems, and putting this money  
17 spent into real drainage and flood control  
18 issues.

19 Our communities downstream will not  
20 survive without the quality of life that the  
21 Pearl offers. We have to have water levels  
22 acceptable for the 100 permitted users  
23 downstream of the project area.

24 Downstreamers are completely against any  
25 further alteration of our river and

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1 completely against any project upstream that  
2 does not directly benefit downstream.

3 If you're going to approve this project,  
4 what are you going to do for us? In the DEIS  
5 it's stated that you will not have cost  
6 estimates for mitigation and habitat loss  
7 until the project design has been approved.  
8 There is not a plan for the hazardous waste  
9 sites, accepting what you just said, until  
10 after it has been approved. How can you  
11 possibly consider approval until you have the  
12 plans that address those issues?

13 On page 11, Item D of the commander's  
14 report, it speaks to public testimony and  
15 comments from communities south of the  
16 project area demonstrated in numerous  
17 existing problems on the lower Pearl. Public  
18 testimony included observations of extended  
19 periods of flooding and extended periods of  
20 low water, sandbars forming in the river  
21 threatening tributary access, low water flows  
22 impacting the Louisiana wildlife management  
23 areas, and low water flows and saltwater  
24 intrusion into fishing grounds and oyster  
25 beds. Since the de-authorization of the

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1 Pearl River as the Federal Navigation  
2 Project, the maintenance of waterway losses  
3 and funding available as authorized by the  
4 caretaker status.

5 It goes on to say that we should have a  
6 comprehensive watershed study of the Pearl to  
7 fully understand the basins, hydrology,  
8 hydrodynamics, and ecosystem. It also says  
9 that we should have improved monitoring to  
10 provide for additional information to better  
11 understand how various sections of the Pearl  
12 River perform during flood events.  
13 Additional instrumentation is desired at  
14 specific river miles.

15 So to you, Corps, do you recognize that  
16 there is much -- you do recognize that  
17 there's much to learn about potential effects  
18 of the lower Pearl, regardless of which  
19 alternative is selected. Doesn't it make  
20 more sense to wait until we are able to  
21 obtain authorization and funding for you to  
22 have these studies completed prior to sealing  
23 our faith?

24 As I said in the beginning, this is all  
25 backwards. You're not putting first things

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1 first. It's like asking forgiveness rather  
2 than permission. There are too many unknowns  
3 still outstanding, both for the flood victims  
4 in Jackson and the downstream flood. Thank  
5 you.

6 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. BECKY CURRY: Hello, I'm  
8 Representative Becky Curry. I have District  
9 92, which Copenhaver, Lawrence, and Lincoln. And  
10 I just want to say that I represent 25,000  
11 people, and I've not talked to one person  
12 that is for this project. The A1, I believe  
13 it is, where you go in, there's 81 houses  
14 that could be put on stilts or made where  
15 they could survive a flood. It worked on the  
16 coast and it sure wouldn't cost what you're  
17 asking to spend of taxpayer's money. And I  
18 think you can double that \$600 million  
19 because there's no way that you can finish  
20 this project with that. I know that there's  
21 a bridge in it that's going to be over \$250  
22 million that I know of that can be added to  
23 that.

24 It really ticked me off that you're  
25 talking about recreation when -- I don't know

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1           your name, I'm sorry, from the board. I  
2           can't see that far without my glasses. But  
3           you're working very hard with the Army Corps,  
4           but you only are concerned about a couple of  
5           counties, Rankin and Hinds. You're only  
6           concern is their recreation. And, you know,  
7           probably the worst thing the legislature ever  
8           did was give you the ability to tax people up  
9           there. I'd like to know how much money your  
10          board has brought in by taxes. You have that  
11          number. Well, could you give me a roundabout  
12          number?

13                 MR. TURNER: No, (unintelligible).

14                 MS. BECKY CURRY: Well, could you give  
15          me a round about number?

16                 MR. TURNER: It's about a million  
17          dollars a year.

18                 MS. BECKY CURRY: About -- you make --  
19          so how many years has that gone on?

20                 MR. TURNER: Since the '60s. And of  
21          that (unintelligible) goes to our maintenance  
22          and (unintelligible) stations.

23                 MS. BECKY CURRY: So you spend a million  
24          dollars a year?

25                 MR. TURNER: It sure appears like that.

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1 MS. BECKY CURRY: So my question is,  
2 y'all are making money to tend to your  
3 problems, but everybody's only concerned with  
4 Rankin and Hinds, and I need to tell you, I  
5 don't want anybody's house to flood. Don't  
6 want anybody's house to flood. But we can't  
7 worry about 143 buildings when you are  
8 looking at destroying from Hinds County to  
9 the Gulf Coast in Louisiana. So if you don't  
10 have a viable product that you know is going  
11 to work, you can tell us, you're going to be  
12 fine; Jackson, you're not going to flood  
13 anymore; everything is great, we can assure  
14 you of this. But you don't have that.

15 So who loses their job? What's the  
16 accountability for the Army Corps of  
17 Engineers when it goes bust and it's the  
18 wrong thing? Who loses their job? Because I  
19 lose mine when something goes wrong. I get  
20 voted out by these people. But nobody loses  
21 their job. There's not any accountability.  
22 And let me assure you that Louisiana and  
23 Mississippi will sue you. We will be in  
24 court fighting over you destroying our  
25 recreation, our way of life, our wildlife,

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1 our fishing and hunting and recreation. We  
2 will be in court.

3 And I just want to say to you, please  
4 think about more than Rankin and Hinds  
5 County.

6 MR. SHAW: Yes, sir.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good evening,  
8 sir. I'm not a politician and I'm not going  
9 to stand up here write you up a speech, but I  
10 do have a couple of facts to point out. The  
11 City of Jackson pumped over 4 million gallons  
12 of raw sewage in the Pearl River last year.  
13 Every bit of sewage from Magee, Mendenhall,  
14 D'Lo, Georgetown, Pinola, Harrisville, comes  
15 through Monticello either by the Strong River  
16 or the Pearl River. Why would anybody want  
17 to do anything to slow down the water rate  
18 coming past our town.

19 And the last thing I got, the Pearl  
20 River covers at a moderate level, 33,000  
21 acres. If my figures are correct, and I'm  
22 not an educated person, but if my figures are  
23 correct, that's 1,000,400,000 square feet of  
24 land. Have we given any thought to making  
25 the reservoir two foot deeper? And how many



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1 cubic feet of water would it hold if we did  
2 that? That's just some thoughts. Thank you.

3 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Yes, sir.

4 MR. ANDY BERRY: I didn't know if you  
5 were responding, I'm sorry.

6 My name is Andy Berry. I'm here in a  
7 couple different capacities tonight. I'm  
8 executive director of the Mississippi  
9 Cattlemen's Association, which I want to talk  
10 about first. I'm also state senator for  
11 District 35, which is Copiah County,  
12 Lawrence, Simpson, and Jeff Davis, which is  
13 the Pearl River from the Hinds County line,  
14 both sides south of here for a couple miles.

15 In my capacity in working for the  
16 Cattlemen's Association, I deal with cattle  
17 farmers and farmers and landowners across the  
18 state, and that includes both sides of the  
19 reservoir and the proposed recreation area  
20 we're talking about here and up north along  
21 the river. I never, not once have I heard  
22 anyone north of Lakeland Drive talk about the  
23 problems they have with the Pearl river.  
24 Anywhere south of the Pearl River, it is very  
25 routine to hear after a rain or some type of

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1 water event, the quickness of how that river  
2 rises and falls and the deterioration of  
3 their lands and the loss of their land.

4 And I heard awhile ago, the last speaker  
5 talk about possible mitigation of walking  
6 trails at LeFleur's Bluff State Park, and we  
7 have people losing acreage, not a damn trail,  
8 acreage because of how this is managed.

9 In my capacity as a state senator, just  
10 this past session, we authorized and funded  
11 gauges for the local Pearl River. Why in  
12 heaven's name will you not wait until we have  
13 those gauges installed and more data to  
14 study? I don't understand that. When has  
15 the last comprehensive study been done for  
16 the lower Pearl? When has the last study of  
17 the Pearl been done?

18 MR. SHAW: I don't have that  
19 information, sir.

20 MR. ANDY BERRY: And you're sitting here  
21 talking about billions of dollars for another  
22 structure, and you haven't studied the river?  
23 And you're not going to wait until we get  
24 these gauges in to see what's going to  
25 happen? I have sympathy for these people up

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1 in Hinds County. I don't want anyone  
2 flooded. I don't want anyone going through  
3 any type of disaster. I truly don't. But  
4 this is people's livelihoods, their heritage,  
5 and we're losing it. Thank you.

6 MR. SHAW: Yes, sir. And we will -- we  
7 will get the information. Like I said, that  
8 will be, you know, part of the public  
9 records. So as you come back to the public  
10 website, you'll start seeing the comments and  
11 responses coming in on there, so.

12 MS. CARRIE SMITH: My name is Carrie  
13 Smith. I'm from Louisiana, so I feel I have  
14 a vested interest in Louisiana as far as the  
15 Pearl River is concerned. We skied in that  
16 river. Well, you can't do that now,  
17 especially if y'all go through with this.  
18 And I live here in Monticello. And in  
19 response to your statement, my opinion, it's  
20 all about money. Y'all are losing money, and  
21 that's why you're rushing it. You haven't  
22 done the studies that you needed to do, and  
23 you can't give us the facts. So it comes  
24 down to how much money has these contractors  
25 and whoever else is in charge lost and will

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1           lose. You know, people here will lose their  
2           livelihood, and they'll lose their homes, and  
3           that's just not right so that somebody can  
4           have a walking trail.

5           MR. SHAW: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Yes,  
6           sir.

7           MR. JASON BARRETT: Yes, sir, Jason  
8           Barrett, senator for District 39. And I know  
9           it was said multiple times throughout this  
10          that this deals with a congressional study  
11          that was authorized by Congress for the Hinds  
12          County, Rankin County area. And to echo a  
13          lot of sentiments that have been given here,  
14          have any studies been done outside of what  
15          you refer to as a trapezoid or the rectangle  
16          that you put up on a slide?

17          MR. TURNER: So, the hydrologic model  
18          that we did went way down river. What we're  
19          showing you -- and I'll go through this  
20          again. The study area is what's in the  
21          authorization. The project area it varies  
22          from alternative to alternative, but it's  
23          where you physically work. And then the  
24          influence area is where you could possibly,  
25          potentially have influences. So we modeled

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1 the river and tracked it through our model  
2 until we saw no further impact. And that's  
3 why you see the box kind of stopped right  
4 there.

5 If you could pull up -- so, this is --  
6 this is what we look at, just one of the  
7 pieces of element that we look at. So what  
8 you're seeing is that point is where the weir  
9 is, that's the lowerings within Jackson. And  
10 then we know that we're transferring water  
11 down. And so when you start transferring  
12 water down, we start looking for those  
13 influences. And if there's a problem, we put  
14 that into our project. And what we were  
15 seeing is about six inches change close to  
16 the weir, and then it starts to tail off  
17 pretty quick. Down here, it's inches. And  
18 then when we get about five miles north of  
19 here, it's imperceptible in the model.

20 So what you need to understand is that  
21 those models are -- there's a relative  
22 tolerance in which they can predict about six  
23 inches. So when we see six inches, we say  
24 that's real. And again, it's plus or minus,  
25 so it could be six inches, it could be a

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1 foot, it could be zero. Right. And so we  
2 bring that into that and that's why you hear  
3 us talking about that.

4 We also looked at the flow velocities  
5 and things, so we're not seeing huge changes  
6 very far away from the weir. Now, that said,  
7 before we actually go into construction, we  
8 continuously intensify our efforts to track  
9 that. And if we find things do change, we  
10 are required to report up that we have  
11 changes. And in some cases, that will  
12 require a change, sometimes directed by the  
13 chief, other times directed by Congress.

14 MR. JASON BARRETT: Well, at that point,  
15 wouldn't it be too late once you've began one  
16 of the options that you've put forth today,  
17 you spent millions of dollars, and if there's  
18 changes, wouldn't it be too late to go back  
19 and change the plan?

20 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Well, what I'm  
21 talking about is if we see changes in design,  
22 that we would have to report that out, and  
23 that may stop construction at all --  
24 completely. We have really good models right  
25 now. Some of the best models I've worked

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1 with. I've been doing this for 39 years, and  
2 they did a really good job on this and they  
3 chased it for miles and miles and miles  
4 beyond this point.

5 MR. JASON BARRETT: Yeah. Well, as a  
6 senator that represents 56,000 people in  
7 southwest Mississippi, and I can certainly  
8 appreciate y'all being here, but if you're  
9 here for comments, I think you need to know  
10 that the overwhelming comment is that people  
11 south of Rankin and Hinds County, they are  
12 not wanting any changes to their river. And  
13 the disconcerting thing is, it certainly  
14 appears like, as someone who has a vested  
15 interest on the Pearl River in Wanilla, it  
16 certainly feels like someone's land in Hinds  
17 County or Rankin County is worth more than  
18 land that we have worked for or our families  
19 have worked for. And to see year after year  
20 after year, and this young lady,  
21 Ms. Colosimo, mentioned sloughing earlier. I  
22 didn't hear anything about that today. But  
23 we are losing tens of acres every year based  
24 upon the rising and lowering of a lake that  
25 we have no control over. And now we're being

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1 told that this is a project that the  
2 secretary is going to decide on in December.  
3 We're here for public comments, but we're not  
4 going to wait until the studies are back that  
5 Senator Barry was just referring to, because  
6 we're going to make a decision in December.  
7 I can tell you it's very frustrating as  
8 citizens of southwest Mississippi. And I  
9 think, since you guys are having a public  
10 comment time, I'm glad you're here, and I'm  
11 glad you know that at this point, we do not  
12 support this.

13 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Anyone else?

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Y'all have a dam  
15 up here that -- I don't know who's  
16 controlling it, but they let that dam fill up  
17 to the top before they ever do it. When they  
18 open the gates, we get it. When we get it --  
19 we're on a river right now and you can't  
20 hardly navigate it because of all the trees  
21 and stuff. If you want to spend some money,  
22 spend some money for the Gulf Coast, clearing  
23 out Pearl River, and then you won't have to  
24 worry about putting a lot of dams in it.

25 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Yes, ma'am.



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1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've got a lot of  
2 questions, but y'all don't have time to  
3 answer them, so I'm just gonna make a  
4 statement. There was an older man here  
5 awhile ago but he had to leave out. He --  
6 I've listened to him and another old  
7 gentleman from Rockport talk about the Pearl  
8 River. Before the reservoir that he's got  
9 pictures. It was level. And the steamboat  
10 coming up at Rockport. Well, then they said,  
11 oh, the reservoir's not going to change it  
12 that much. Go to my place at Crock Fork  
13 (phonetic) right now. You can't get to the  
14 river unless you're going to fall down a 40  
15 foot bluff. I mean, it's like that man said,  
16 every time -- the reservoir was supposed to  
17 been good for Jackson, and it's been dang  
18 good for Jackson. It's brought in a lot of  
19 money. And I feel like one of those models  
20 you was showing awhile ago is going to be the  
21 One Lake Project that they've been trying to  
22 push on us, but y'all calling it CTO or  
23 whatever. Y'all calling it by a different  
24 name. And we're not gonna have any kind  
25 of -- I think we should have to vote on it,

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1           because nobody's giving us a chance down  
2           here. I mean, yeah, I feel sorry for people  
3           who gets flooded, but I feel about as sorry  
4           for them as they feel for us down here. I'm  
5           sorry.

6                       MAYOR JUSTIN MCKENZIE: Hello, I'm Mayor  
7           Justin McKenzie, and I'm from Columbia,  
8           Mississippi. I don't have a well-written  
9           statement like Ms. Martha did. She was  
10          prepared to go through that spiel. But I  
11          want to say I echo everything she said, and  
12          everything that I've heard these people say  
13          so far has been in line with the same  
14          sentiments that I have and that I've heard  
15          from people in our community.

16                      I represent about 6,800 people in the  
17          City of Columbia.

18                      And I think based on some of the folks  
19          that I see here from Marion County, I can  
20          kind of speak for some of them as well. I  
21          grew up on the river. At four years old, I  
22          was driving a boat up and down the river down  
23          in Marion County, going with my grandfather,  
24          fishing. We ran trotlines in the morning, we  
25          ran them in the evening. I can talk about

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1 all these mushy little things all day long,  
2 but I can tell you that the experiences that  
3 I had with him are memories that I have today  
4 because of an opportunity I had then. He  
5 died before I graduated high school. You  
6 know, I don't have time to make memories with  
7 him today, but those memories were made back  
8 on that river way back when, and I hope to  
9 never, ever forget that.

10 I understand that flooding is an issue  
11 up there. In the slide earlier, we were less  
12 than 200 homes would be elevated. I believe  
13 it was 170 something could be potentially  
14 impacted and elevated.

15 In the 2020 flood, our town received  
16 significant damage. I'm still dealing with  
17 MEMA and FEMA to obtain all of our  
18 reimbursement for money that was spent then.  
19 Why did we receive significant damage? Most  
20 of the homes did not. I had very few -- very  
21 minimal amount of homes that were damaged.  
22 But I had Highway 98 working as a levee down  
23 there. It was restricting the water flow.  
24 The level was almost five foot higher on the  
25 north side of Highway 98 than it was the

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1 south side of 98.

2 I also, in this presentation today, and  
3 I do want to say thank you to the Corps of  
4 Engineers and staff members for being here  
5 and coming to hear from us on a local level.  
6 But I do want to circle back to -- the  
7 flooding that took place and what was stated  
8 earlier really rubbed me wrong. We were  
9 lucky that the Ross Barnett was down to kill  
10 some dadgum weeds. We were lucky the Ross  
11 Barnett was down trying to kill weeds. The  
12 damn thing ought to be dropped anyway. I  
13 don't care about anybody's boat dock north of  
14 that levee. If they need to adjust it to a  
15 floating dock, then they need to adjust to  
16 that. But what I feel, and the sentiments  
17 from every coffee shop you go to in Columbia,  
18 Mississippi, is that when they get good and  
19 ready, they dump it on in. And when they  
20 ready to shut it off, they don't mind killing  
21 the faucet, and they will drop that water so  
22 darn fast that the river sloughs in.

23 We had 102 acres down here in southern  
24 Lawrence County that my dad owned. My  
25 uncle's back here. He owns some 2 to 300

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1            acres right now on the Pearl River on River  
2            Road. Convenient name isn't it, River Road  
3            run along the Pearl River. It's a historic  
4            roadway, has a historic landmark located on  
5            it. It floods every time we deal with  
6            massive rainfall in Jackson, Mississippi.  
7            But every time that it's flooding, the gates  
8            on the reservoir are wide open, dumping the  
9            water down here. Now, if it was dropped to  
10           restrict -- or to allow us more of the water  
11           that's already flowing down the river and  
12           should proceed on, we would have higher  
13           levels down here. At the same time, they  
14           would have a larger capacity to then obtain  
15           and hold water until the rainfall stops  
16           hopefully. I mean, we're not looking for a  
17           40 day, 40 night flood as experienced back in  
18           Noah's time. But in any normal event, we  
19           would expect that the rainfall would stop  
20           before the capacity would be reached and they  
21           would have to start dumping. Therefore, the  
22           initial flash flooding could drain off and  
23           then the river could be turned loose from the  
24           Barnett Reservoir to give them some relief.  
25           I think that's reasonable management. I

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1 don't know who manages it. I kind of got  
2 humored awhile ago when it was said by  
3 Representative Morgan, that it was managed by  
4 the phone. You know, it doesn't matter to me  
5 who's up there watching. I think the Army  
6 Corps of Engineers, one of your staff  
7 members, should be managing that reservoir.  
8 That's what I think. And that's -- I say  
9 that because then I think you'd take a biased  
10 person out of the picture or a biased board  
11 of directors out of the picture, so that  
12 you're not dealing with folks keeping it at  
13 the boathouse level. It's disappointing to  
14 see that we would even entertain spending  
15 some 600 and something million dollars to a  
16 billion dollars to construct an area -- to  
17 construct a 1,700 or more acre lake in an  
18 area that's going to affect 170 something  
19 homes when why don't we look at going in just  
20 like y'all said earlier, in the flood zone,  
21 and the low lying areas of the river, when  
22 the river jumps up and gets out of its banks,  
23 why aren't we widening the bank maybe in that  
24 area, dredging it and widening, that's a  
25 solution to start helping that. Let's dredge

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1           it and let's widen it a little bit. And then  
2           we take the overspill area and let's remove  
3           some of that dirt. Let's excavate it, let's  
4           haul it off. Let's use it. Let's use it to  
5           build up the area for the lagoon in Jackson  
6           or the sewer site. I mean, I've got to  
7           operate two lift station or two soil lagoons  
8           in Columbia, Mississippi. I do not want them  
9           to flood and spill over into the river,  
10          because the folks in Bogalusa don't deserve  
11          that, and I should be humiliated if it does.  
12          I don't think the folks in Jackson that  
13          operate the local sewer and water have the  
14          same standards that I do. But I would be  
15          humiliated if the folks south of us received  
16          that off of us. I don't want to receive it  
17          from Monticello. So I would encourage, if  
18          Mayor Watts was having an issue with that and  
19          it spilling over into her lagoon, her to find  
20          a way to invest to ante up on her lagoon so  
21          that it would be suitable to hold the  
22          capacity and provide from water spilling over  
23          in it, washing raw sewage down toward me.  
24                    I think that the money could be better  
25          spent widening, removing some of the

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1 landscape next to the river along the lines.  
2 If you don't want to dredge it, like  
3 Representative Morgan said, I've heard my  
4 granddaddy grew up on the river, my dad, all  
5 them, I've heard the stories of when they  
6 dredged it and they set all the trees over  
7 here, and then they dredged out some sand and  
8 stuff and just piled it up and immediately it  
9 washed back into the river. We don't want to  
10 experience that again. That'd be a waste of  
11 money, time, and effort. But I do think that  
12 there's some responsible ways to do it  
13 without creating a weir or dam in Jackson to  
14 create an additional resort style place. I  
15 mean, 49 percent of that money, I guess, can  
16 be spent on that recreation because we'll  
17 exceed the 50 percent. I don't want any of  
18 my tax revenue spent on recreation of a lake  
19 in Jackson. That's just -- I'm trying to  
20 speak for all of Columbia and Marion County,  
21 and I think I'm in line with everything that  
22 I would hear sitting around the coffee pot  
23 today, what I heard six months ago, what I  
24 heard four years ago when we signed a  
25 resolution. But the entire Board of Aldermen



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1 for the City of Columbia unanimously voted in  
2 a resolution to oppose the One Lake Project.  
3 And we still stand by that. Thank you.

4 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Sir.

5 MR. MARK HERBERT: My name is Mark  
6 Herbert. I'm a local resident here and a  
7 fisherman on the river. I have more  
8 technical questions than anything. We  
9 started out with a One Lake Project and a  
10 very big economic impact up there. And so  
11 our question becomes weirs. What level is  
12 the current weir in Jackson?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 251.

14 MR. MARK HERBERT: 251. So were going  
15 to have one project that says 256 and one  
16 says 258.

17 MR. SHAW: 258 is the Locally Preferred  
18 Plan.

19 MR. MARK HERBERT: So that's going to  
20 put you a seven foot lake, is that correct?  
21 It's going to put you water level seven foot  
22 higher than what we are now.

23 MR. SHAW: For Alternate C, yes, sir.

24 MR. MARK HERBERT: So the only -- you  
25 have one of these projects that doesn't have

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1 a weir. So does that mean there's not going  
2 to be a lake in that project?

3 MR. SHAW: There would be no difference.

4 MR. MARK HERBERT: What you mean there  
5 would be no difference?

6 MR. SHAW: In the current project. In  
7 other words, the conditions are there today.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Unintelligible).

9 MR. SHAW: That's right. Alternate E  
10 would be the same as the current project in  
11 terms of elevation of the river.

12 MR. MARK HERBERT: So we'll leave the  
13 weir at 251.

14 MR. SHAW: Yeah.

15 MR. MARK HERBERT: Not do away with the  
16 weir at all. It's just going to be at 251.

17 MR. SHAW: That weir that's there is for  
18 water supply.

19 MR. MARK HERBERT: Right.

20 MR. SHAW: For the City of Jackson.

21 MR. MARK HERBERT: For the City of  
22 Jackson.

23 MR. SHAW: Yes, sir.

24 MR. MARK HERBERT: So we dig a lake  
25 without a weir.

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1           MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Look. All right,  
2           so what you have going on is two major  
3           components of the plant. So the way that you  
4           can move water quicker, there's two things  
5           that really slow the water down. You have  
6           the roughness of the channel itself, which  
7           could be anything in the channel, trees,  
8           grass and all that stuff. And then there's  
9           the sides of the channel. So you can widen  
10          the channel and that helps convey water. You  
11          can remove some of the roughness and that  
12          helps convey water. In this case, they're  
13          doing both. So they're widening the channel,  
14          which gives you more capacity and removing  
15          the material so it gets a little bit better  
16          roughness. That's E.

17                 D, as you said, the same project, but  
18          they put a weir in there to contain water --

19          MR. MARK HERBERT: And make an economic  
20          development later.

21          MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Well, the Corps of  
22          Engineers are not in that business.

23          MR. MARK HERBERT: Well, it did an  
24          economic development study, did it not?

25          MR. TROY CONSTANCE: No, that's not the

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1 kind of economics we did. What we're looking  
2 at is damage is reduced.

3 MR. MARK HERBERT: Okay.

4 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Because it's a  
5 different -- it's its own different kind of  
6 analysis. Ours is what kind of damages are  
7 occurring in that area and then what is the  
8 cost of removing those damages. Right. And  
9 when you talk about NET, you want the number  
10 of damages that you remove to be higher than  
11 the investment that you put in. That's our  
12 economic evaluation.

13 MR. MARK HERBERT: So explain to me the  
14 difference between putting the weir --  
15 leaving the weir at 251 versus the 256 versus  
16 258 makes a difference in flood control.

17 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: So what makes a  
18 difference in flood control is widening of  
19 the channel.

20 MR. MARK HERBERT: Okay. That has  
21 nothing to do with the weir.

22 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: That's right. And  
23 we point that out, there's no difference in  
24 water conveyance between E and D. The  
25 difference comes in when you put the weir in

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1 place, then you start to accrue additional  
2 benefits and those come in the form of  
3 recreation. So we looked at all of the  
4 economic benefit that is associated with any  
5 plan we have.

6 MR. MARK HERBERT: So that E would keep  
7 the river exactly the way we had it now,  
8 would not bother us.

9 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Not quite exactly.  
10 We perform pretty much the same under flood  
11 conditions.

12 MR. MARK HERBERT: Whereas we put a weir  
13 up there, then it changes some dynamics with  
14 things of low flow, evaporation rates into  
15 August, and that's why you have added a low  
16 flow gate.

17 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: The low flow gate  
18 is --

19 MR. MARK HERBERT: Now, you've not gone  
20 from the weir, now you've gone to a  
21 discharge. Not a true weir, but a discharge.

22 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: So the weir is  
23 designed to overflow. The low flow is to  
24 manage conditions like, as you're saying, you  
25 get too low in the river you need to continue

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1 to take on water after.

2 MR. MARK HERBERT: So if we have an E,  
3 we don't have very much change here, whereas  
4 the other, we're depending on a local gate  
5 and somebody in charge of it, not us.

6 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: We'll need to  
7 manage the water.

8 MR. MARK HERBERT: Thank you.

9 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Anyone else?

10 MR. STEVE ROLLINS: My name is Steve  
11 Rollins. I own property behind Homer's  
12 Grocery Store. Y'all can't control the dam  
13 up there or weir you got up there now,  
14 because water comes up so high so fast, and  
15 it goes down so fast. What it does is when  
16 you think them big shots up there is going to  
17 lower your water by two inches, y'all will  
18 close that dam up, and it jerks the banks  
19 off. I've lost probably anywhere from 15 to  
20 50 acres of land. And I lost trees that big  
21 around in the river. And how y'all gonna  
22 control that with another weir? That's  
23 stupid. I disagree with you all the way.  
24 You can't control the water now. How you  
25 going to control two of them or three of

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1           them? There ain't no way. And I don't want  
2           to lose no more land. I lost enough. Y'all  
3           don't try to control it. Don't worry about  
4           them people up there in that lake losing the  
5           water going down that far. Let it drop down.  
6           Like the guy said, get float -- float piers,  
7           help us down here. Thank you.

8           MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir.

9           MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: My name is Alton  
10          Letchworth. I'm a product of the MAC  
11          (phonetic) second unit from Vicksburg and the  
12          Corps of Engineers. I spent 30 years on the  
13          MAC secondary. Colonel, I know you got a job  
14          ahead of you. I dealt with flood control  
15          dikes. And, you know, the (unintelligible)  
16          operation is the largest hired labor unit  
17          within the Corps Engineers. And I retired  
18          from the Corps off of that second unit as  
19          chief of the second unit when I retired. So  
20          I know -- I'm well aware of weirs, dams,  
21          locks, and what to do.

22          All the tributaries that flow into the  
23          Pearl River, had they have been properly  
24          managed over the last 40 years, they wouldn't  
25          be flooded in some of those areas. They

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1 don't keep them cleaned out. So when you  
2 don't keep those tributaries cleaned out, the  
3 water is not going to flow like it should.  
4 If they were opened up, those tributaries  
5 would flow into the Pearl River and some of  
6 those back areas would not flood because of  
7 that. That's simple math. It's not hard to  
8 figure out.

9 And my question is, the dredging that  
10 you're going to do on the Pearl River, what  
11 are you going to do with the discharge of  
12 that dredge?

13 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: He pulled the map  
14 up there. The material they excavated from  
15 the channel would be placed in the side of  
16 the channels.

17 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: That's hazardous  
18 material.

19 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: No, sir. We  
20 wouldn't -- the Corps of Engineers has their  
21 policy, but we won't take --

22 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: Jackson has been  
23 dumping sewage into the river up there for  
24 the last 40 years.

25 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: I understand this,



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1 sir, and we do the regular HTRW testing.

2 This gentleman right here is here today,  
3 if you want to talk to him about how we'll  
4 handle that, but I promise you, we don't  
5 construct on sites that have HTRW. It has to  
6 be a clean site before we go.

7 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: That's your  
8 opinion. Our opinion down here is they dump  
9 raw sewage in the Pearl River every day.

10 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Yes, sir.

11 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: That's not going  
12 to -- none of this is going to solve that  
13 problem. 81 homes that you had up there,  
14 that's going to be done -- those 81 homes,  
15 you could pay them \$250,000 for every one of  
16 those homes, and you've spent less than \$40  
17 million.

18 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: And I do agree that  
19 (unintelligible).

20 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: So you could buy  
21 every home out that's in the flood area, and  
22 you would use half the money that you're  
23 going to spend on this.

24 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: So one of the  
25 things that we look at is that we look at the

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1 damages reduced. So if you look at the  
2 nonstructural plan, it only has 143  
3 structures in it. And so one of the things  
4 we do is how effective is the action. So  
5 when you compare the damages that do exist,  
6 we showed that the 773 structures in the 100  
7 year floodplain, all of them experiencing  
8 some sort of flooding. To justify raising,  
9 because of the cost that you're talking  
10 about, you can only get to about 143. But  
11 when you start looking at the structural  
12 plans and the very structural plans, you  
13 start incorporating a whole lot more  
14 structures for damages reduced, so those  
15 become more effective in resolving the  
16 problem. So we don't just look at the  
17 benefit cost ratio and the net benefits.  
18 There are other criteria we need to look at.  
19 And again, of course, we talked about that as  
20 well. One of them is indeed acceptability.  
21 And that is how well we would be accepted by  
22 the communities, by our partners in it, how  
23 well it is cast against existing policies  
24 through laws and regulations.

25 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: And the weir --

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1 now you can put a boat in below the  
2 reservoir. If you put that weir in there,  
3 you won't be able to go over that weir and go  
4 lower than the I20 bridge.

5 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: I'm sorry, I'm not  
6 following. Say it again.

7 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: If you put a boat  
8 in the river below the reservoir, between the  
9 reservoir and the I20 bridge, when you put  
10 that weir in there, you're not going to be  
11 able to come below the I20 bridge. You're  
12 going to be confined to that one area.

13 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Yes, sir, I believe  
14 that would be correct.

15 MR. ALTON LETCHWORTH: So if they  
16 develop that area there and people put houses  
17 and whatever else, one theory is they going  
18 to cut channels in there and build houses  
19 back up in there on those channels. Well,  
20 the only boating area that they'd be able to  
21 run in is from the I20 bridge up to behind  
22 the reservoir. So -- and none of this  
23 benefits Lawrence County. We get no good  
24 benefit out of this.

25 And if the reservoir had never been

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1 built, we wouldn't be standing here  
2 addressing this area today. The reservoir  
3 was built on the idea of flood control and  
4 recreation, but they took the flood control  
5 off of it after it got built. They used that  
6 flood control statement for money to build.  
7 That's what they used, how they used it. So  
8 it was false pretense in the very beginning  
9 of when they built it. And we've suffered  
10 from that ever since it was built. You can  
11 go up here -- just like you said earlier, you  
12 can go up the Pearl River north of the  
13 reservoir, and it's a beautiful sight. If  
14 you fly a helicopter from there down here,  
15 you'll see banks sloughed in. Up the river  
16 here in the summertime, you have to get out  
17 of your boat and pull it up the river. And  
18 it's all because of the reservoir and flood  
19 control.

20 So my 30 years with the Corps of  
21 Engineers over the Mississippi River, I'm  
22 well aware of weirs, underwater weirs.  
23 Victoria Bend, the project that's up there,  
24 what it does, it does what it's supposed to  
25 do, it makes -- it keeps from having to

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1 dredge, but when it leaves there, it divides  
2 into somewhere else. So I'm well aware of  
3 what -- how it works and what it does. And  
4 in my opinion, in my 30 years from the Corps  
5 of Engineers, this is a disaster for Lawrence  
6 County. Thank you.

7 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: Yes, sir.

8 MR. SHAW: Yes, sir.

9 MR. SCOTT MCCLELLAN: I'm Scotty  
10 McClellan and I've lived here my entire life.  
11 I was raised up on the river. That man right  
12 yonder, Mark Senter, me and him played in  
13 that river. We fished in that river  
14 together. That's beside the point on this  
15 right here what I'm fixing to tell you. I've  
16 worked in that paper mill right yonder 44 and  
17 a half years. What's this gonna do to my  
18 paper mill? Huh? Come on, I didn't tell  
19 you. That mill -- I'm on a paper machine and  
20 I use lots of water, reckon where that water  
21 comes from.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 75 million  
23 gallons a day.

24 MR. SCOTT MCCLELLAN: Ho do you know,  
25 Thurman? He knows. 75 million gallons. You

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1 build this and we can't get the water, and  
2 Thurman will tell you if I'm wrong, but it  
3 has to be a certain temperature, correct?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It does.

5 MR. SCOTT MCCLELLAN: So here we are.  
6 And let me tell you something, you shut that  
7 paper mill down, Michael Sanford, you a  
8 supervisor, you and Mr. Lynn Harland, what's  
9 that paper mill do for our county?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We couldn't  
11 survive without it.

12 MR. SCOTT MCCLELLAN: Couldn't survive  
13 without it. You talking about a lawsuit, you  
14 talking about some mad folks. Yes, sir.  
15 Think about it, people, think about it.  
16 That's all I ask.

17 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Anyone else.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I ask one  
19 question?

20 MR. SHAW: Yes, ma'am.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you said that  
22 a secretary somewhere is going to make the  
23 decision.

24 MR. SHAW: Assistant Secretary for the  
25 Army of Civil Works, Mr. Connor.

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1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay, so why  
2 isn't he listening to all of this?

3 MS. COLOSIMO: My name is Robyn Colosimo  
4 and he's my boss, and so I'm here  
5 representing him directly as his highest  
6 career civil servant. So he came for the  
7 original listening sessions in 2023. We are  
8 helping inform him through this process. And  
9 so the reason he makes that decision is  
10 because Congress directed that. That's when  
11 we talk about Congress decided there was a  
12 project here of work. We have to determine  
13 through this process collectively to include  
14 this public input if there's something that  
15 is implementable with the authorities that  
16 has support and that decision goes to him to  
17 make that.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, I hope you  
19 let him know that he's talking about from  
20 Jackson, Mississippi to the Mississippi Gulf  
21 Coast to Louisiana. We're not talking about  
22 two counties. I cannot say that enough that  
23 we are desperate for him to have heard us.  
24 And I sure wish he had taken the time to be  
25 here to listen.

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1 MS. COLOSIMO: I assure you, ma'am, that  
2 he is listening. And I know Mayor Watts even  
3 met with him not long ago, so he is very  
4 aware of this issue and I will continue to  
5 translate all the things I've heard here.  
6 Thank you.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Real short. In  
8 1980 I was elected president of the Pearl  
9 River Land Conservation Association, and we  
10 did get the legislature back then to give us  
11 a 24 inch fall in 24 hours. And it helped  
12 the sloping of the bluffs, believe it or not,  
13 but we've gotten away from that over the  
14 years. One question I want to ask y'all, and  
15 I appreciate y'all coming in, because I know  
16 this is your job, you gotta do it, but have  
17 y'all flown from Jackson down to the Coast to  
18 see what the Pearl River looks like? You  
19 need to be able to do that. That would be  
20 money well spent.

21 MR. SHAW: Thank you.

22 MS. COLOSIMO: Here's my alibi, I was  
23 not in the meeting that happened in the  
24 Pentagon. It was actually with our second  
25 political principal that being Mr. Pinkham.



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1 I believe that's correct, Ms. Watts.

2 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Next.

3 MR. ANDREW WHITEHURST: I'M Andrew  
4 Whitehurst. I asked questions at two  
5 meetings so far, but when the -- I'm the --  
6 I'm the water. What am I? I'm so tired.  
7 I'm the water program director at Healthy.  
8 Gulf, the Gulf Restoration Network. And when  
9 this document came out, I looked for an  
10 economics appendix, and the next day I called  
11 Eric Williams, the guy up there, was able to  
12 talk to him, ask him where's the economics  
13 appendix. There's a statement in the main  
14 report that says, see Economics Section, and  
15 there's not an Economic Section, and there's  
16 not an economics appendix. And I've got an  
17 economist who's going to charge me \$200 an  
18 hour to review it if I could find the  
19 economics appendix. So before the end of the  
20 comment period, will there be any economics  
21 appendix released on this? There was one of  
22 these in the 2018 document that the drainage  
23 district put out. It had charts and graphs,  
24 and it had the assumptions that were used  
25 to -- all of the things from your guidances

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1 and your engineering notebooks was in there,  
2 you could follow it and you could see the  
3 work, and that's not there now. So will  
4 there be a way to look at that or are you  
5 going to try to prepare one?

6 MR. TROY CONSTANCE: So we have -- so we  
7 have the information that underwrites the  
8 economic evaluation that is in the report.  
9 Our economist is here, and he's been tasked  
10 to try to pull some of that together. It  
11 wouldn't be the traditional economic benefit  
12 that you're used to, but it would be the  
13 foundation of all the economic analysis that  
14 we've done. We're doing that right now  
15 because we're having the same request from  
16 the secretary's office and from headquarters.  
17 And so as soon as we get that together, we'll  
18 share that with you.

19 MR. ANDREW WHITEHURST: I have one more  
20 question about your history slide. Would you  
21 mind dialing back to the history slide? The  
22 2007 USACE Preliminary Draft Report compared  
23 an older levee plan to the Two Lake Project  
24 and the Corps of Engineers, after they  
25 compared it and looked at the relative cost

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1           said, we're not going to build your lake and  
2           we're not going to do any more studies.  
3           Thank you very much. And they said, if you  
4           want to go forward, Rankin Hinds Drainage  
5           District, you can get permission from  
6           Congress to do it. That's the story I know,  
7           and that's not what that says, but it was  
8           done with Corps oversight. So the Rankin  
9           Hinds Drainage District developed their DEIS,  
10          the Corps is watching over their shoulder,  
11          checking that they're following NEPA. And I  
12          wonder how we went from 2007 to 2008 when the  
13          Corps said, we're not going to do this until  
14          now, when we've got the Corps helping sell a  
15          plan to build a lake, the kind of thing that  
16          they said they weren't going to do? How'd  
17          that happen?

18                 And you know, I've got a -- there's an  
19                 imbalance of power here. You know, we small  
20                 environmental groups are like fleas on the  
21                 back of you all and the Drainage District,  
22                 but we've been to Washington twice for the  
23                 Pentagon, haven't gotten to meet with  
24                 Mr. Connor, but we've met with Mr. Pinkham  
25                 once and then Mr. Leach once. They've been

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1           how many times a month? I don't know.  
2           There's an imbalance of power here and  
3           there's, you know, I don't know how to  
4           explain it, but there's a story from one of  
5           the early public meetings before 2015, I  
6           guess. And it was when the late John McGowan  
7           went to the meetings, and a couple who had a  
8           swamp tour talked to him after the meeting.  
9           He was a very charming man. And the swamp  
10          tour couple, they were very attractive. And  
11          they told him why the lower waterways were  
12          going to be a problem for them. And he let  
13          them say their piece and then smiled and  
14          winked and leaned in and said, you know, I'm  
15          going to win, I'm rich. And I think that  
16          explains a lot about this process, about the  
17          imbalance of power. And I wish there wasn't  
18          a hurry to approve this thing because as I  
19          said the other night, you can do it well or  
20          you can do it by the same. Thank you.

21                 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Yes, ma'am.

22                 MS. CYNTHIA STEWART: Okay, no  
23          questions. I'm just going to take a  
24          statement. So I said before that I'm just  
25          representing myself, my family. And I said,

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1 we've been here since the 1800s, and I think  
2 it was 18 -- in the 1850s, so a long time,  
3 over 150 years. We have stories in our  
4 family of the floodings, where it got to the  
5 house. In the -- I think it was 1902 or 1906  
6 that the flood got the highest point. In  
7 2020, yes, we did have a flood, but I will  
8 say in 1976, that was not a natural flood.  
9 That was a man being flood by the reservoir.  
10 They decided to let the water go as late as  
11 they did, which impacted all of us  
12 downstream.

13 My husband and I just inherited the  
14 place with my brother and we had the land  
15 surveyed and I know I've lost 18 acres on the  
16 Pearl River and surrounding waterway. The  
17 banks to the river and the surrounding  
18 waterway are so high that in order to go  
19 swimming now we have a rope, right, we go  
20 down by a huge rope in order to get to the  
21 bank, and the banks are keeping on eroding.  
22 The Army Corps of Engineers built a second  
23 bridge over our land and created a waterway  
24 so that we wouldn't have so much flooding.  
25 Well, guess what? The waterway has eroded so

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1 much that it's almost a second egress of the  
2 tributary. So I'm sorry, you're adding  
3 another lake, another water -- more water  
4 that you don't have control of that's going  
5 to come down -- and yes, I know you said it  
6 wasn't going to impact the water levels, but  
7 during flooding times, the rich seem to get  
8 the answers that they want and we suffer  
9 downstream. And now you're talking about  
10 more water coming. I don't like this plan.  
11 I don't think anybody in this room likes  
12 these plans. Thank you.

13 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Sir.

14 MR. THERMAN LAMBERT: Therman Lambert.  
15 I've been a resident of Lawrence County all  
16 my life. I worked at the paper mill 44  
17 years.

18 MR. SHAW: Could you get a little closer  
19 to the mic? Give your name again, please,  
20 I'm sorry.

21 MR. THERMAN LAMBERT: Therman Lambert.  
22 We own some property down around 587 right on  
23 the river. I can see the river from my front  
24 porch every morning. We had left in my  
25 wife's family for four generations, since the

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1 1800s. Ever since they built the reservoir,  
2 I know in the early '80s my father-in-law  
3 walked in one day and said, well, they took  
4 300 acres off my tax roll, it's gone to the  
5 river. It's on the other side of the river  
6 now. And the Pearl River is the property  
7 line. So it's the other man's river right  
8 now. We inherited the place in 2004. We had  
9 100 acres down there. Now we've got 775  
10 acres down there. Talking about losing 50  
11 acres, that ain't nothing. Lose 500 acres,  
12 that's a lot of land and ain't nothing you  
13 can do about it.

14 Like I said, and I haven't figured out  
15 yet how a little lake is going to help. All  
16 you're going to do is fill the floodplain up  
17 up there. And when you fill the floodplain  
18 up, that water ain't got but one place to go,  
19 here. It's going to make our flooding worse  
20 when we have a very high river. I remember  
21 '79, we had 1,000 acres under water. We  
22 had -- I've had 400 acres under water five  
23 times this year. I know about the river  
24 flooding. And all the banks, that river used  
25 to be lined with willow trees. There's no

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1 willow trees on that river anymore because  
2 they've all sloped in the river because they  
3 dropped them out so fast. I've seen that  
4 river dropped 12 feet in less than 10 hours.  
5 And you can't say that's at all natural. If  
6 they got to maintain -- the only thing that  
7 saved -- hurt us one year, they had raised  
8 the level in the reservoir twelve inches  
9 because they were going to have a bass  
10 tournament. We had a heavy rain. Guess who  
11 got all the extra water? We did. So, I  
12 mean, another lake ain't going to help  
13 because, like I said, you fill a tub up, you  
14 ain't got nowhere for the water to go but  
15 downhill. And that's all it's going to do is  
16 make a bigger tub. Thank you.

17 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Anyone else?

18 Okay. I just want to take this  
19 opportunity to thank you all for coming.  
20 Your voices have been heard. If you still  
21 feel like you would like some additional  
22 information, our subject matter experts, like  
23 I said, are downstairs. We you still want  
24 your comments. If you don't have the  
25 opportunity to either access a website



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1 through e-mail and you can still send things  
2 by the postal service. So I would just thank  
3 you for your participation here. Please have  
4 a safe trip home. Thank you all.

5 (Hearing concluded at 8:15 p.m.)

6

7 ORIGINAL: THOMAS SHAW, ESQ.

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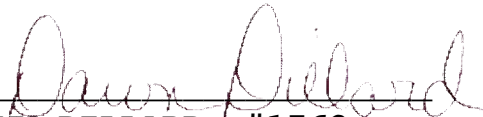
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1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER  
 2 I, Dawn Dillard, Court Reporter and  
 3 Notary Public, in and for the State of  
 4 Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing  
 5 contains a true and correct transcript of the  
 6 public hearing of USACE 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 4th day of August, 2024.

23   
 DAWN DILLARD, #1763  
 CCR

24 My Commission Expires:  
 25 March 7, 2025