



Transcript of the Testimony of
**USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management
Project Meeting (1_00),**

Date: May 23, 2023

Case: USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project
Meeting (1:00)

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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
VICKSBURG DISTRICT

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PUBLIC MEETING FOR THE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK
MANAGEMENT PROJECT

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The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers - Vicksburg
District public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
Management Project, held at Slidell High School
Auditorium, 1 Tiger Drive, Slidell, Louisiana 70458,
beginning at 1:06 p.m.

Reported by:

Jenna Limjuco, BA-CCR
Certified Court Reporter

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APPEARANCES:

Representing the Army Corps of Engineers:

Thomas R. Shaw

Robyn Colosimo

Leslie Prochaska

Colonel Christopher Klein

1 TOM SHAW:

2 Good afternoon, everybody. My name
3 is Tom Shaw. I'm the project manager for
4 the Vicksburg District. Thank you so
5 much for coming to the public meeting for
6 the Pearl River Flood Risk Management
7 Project.

8 Just a little bit of background here:
9 we've got some sign up lists that are out
10 in the foyer. We would ask if you -- if
11 you would put your name and address, and
12 maybe contact info -- I would ask that
13 you wouldn't put your personal email out
14 there because this would become part of
15 the public record, so to speak.

16 Also there are some study boards that
17 are out there with some push pins, and if
18 you're okay with doing it, we would
19 appreciate if you would stick a push pin
20 in that represents the location where you
21 live, because we'd really like to know
22 everybody that's part of this.

23 So we've got an allotted two hours
24 for this meeting, and we want to -- we
25 are here to collect information. We want

1 to know your feedback, your input with
2 respect to this project. So there's a
3 lot of value in that to us, so I would
4 just ask, if you would, if for some
5 reason we're starting to run over, there
6 are multiple ways -- we'll talk about
7 that -- ways that you can actually leave
8 your feedback or your input.

9 So with that, I kind of want to go
10 over the rules -- what we call rules of
11 engagement, just for a second. So when
12 we get through the presentation, one of
13 the things that will happen is that we
14 will do -- we will take comments. There
15 are multiple ways that can be done.
16 There's comment cards out in the lobby
17 and there's a comment box for you to drop
18 those cards in. We will also have the
19 ability for people, if you want to sit
20 down and give your -- like your video, if
21 you will, of your comments, then that's
22 absolutely a way to do it. And then we
23 also have an email address, and I'll show
24 that in just a little bit.

25 So I would ask that to allow

1 everybody to speak who wants to speak,
2 please limit your comments to about three
3 minutes, and that will give everybody the
4 opportunity to provide some input. I
5 would ask that you please be respectful
6 and try to avoid interrupting a panel, a
7 moderator, or somebody who's trying to
8 respond to a comment that you may have.

9 That's for those that are here in the
10 auditorium today. We also have this
11 going on via Webex, so we have a virtual
12 meeting as well. Likewise, you can
13 provide input there and it will be
14 collected and be part of the chat. We
15 can actually chat into the Webex itself,
16 and I will ask that you please refrain
17 from spamming that chat -- multiple
18 people just giving an influx of saying
19 the same thing. We ask that you not try
20 to dominate the conversation.

21 So the email address -- I'm going to
22 go ahead and give that you in just a
23 moment, but without further ado, I would
24 like to announce or tell you who the
25 speakers will be today. So with us on

1 your far right would be Robyn Colosimo.
2 Robyn is the Assistant Secretary of the
3 Army for Project Planning. And beside
4 her is Vicksburg District Commander
5 Colonel Christopher Klein, and beside the
6 Commander is Leslie Prochaska. Leslie is
7 a Plan Formulator with the Regional
8 Planning and Environment Division South.

9 And so with that, we've kind of
10 covered our housekeeping, so if you will,
11 can we go to the next slide, please?

12 Okay. So the question everybody is
13 asking: what's on the agenda? Why are we
14 here? Well, do value the input from the
15 public. The Assistant Secretary of the
16 Army has asked the Corps of Engineers to
17 review a document that was provided by
18 non-federal interests, and that was
19 something that the Corps has taken on.

20 It was an assignment, basically, that
21 we were giving to try to fill in the
22 blanks that there were in this plan --
23 things that there were problems that
24 generated and some could be filled out
25 completely, some could not. So the

1 meeting purpose is to allow the public --
2 you, the public -- to speak up and
3 provide us some feedback.

4 The non-federal interest I mentioned,
5 that is the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River
6 Flood Control and Drainage District --
7 Flood and Drainage Control District,
8 excuse me. And so one of the things I
9 will point to is that why are we here?
10 Why are we doing, you know, what we are?

11 And so there's two authorizations, if
12 you will, that you can see there. First
13 is Section 3104 of the Water Resources
14 Development Act 2007. What that
15 particular section stated was was that
16 the Secretary of the Army is authorized
17 to construct the National Economic
18 Development Plan, the locally preferred
19 plan -- which is -- that's the plan put
20 forth by non-federal interests -- or a
21 combination thereof.

22 In Section 1176 of WRDA 2018,
23 modifies that and says that we do have to
24 consider downstream effects associated
25 with that project as well. So there is a

1 reason for why we're doing this, and
2 that's the issue of the Pearl flooding in
3 the Jackson metro area. As our panelists
4 will talk about, there have been multiple
5 floods there with lots of damage, and
6 they are in desperate need of a flood
7 risk solution.

8 And so as I mentioned earlier, the
9 non-federal interest provided their draft
10 feasibility study, environmental impact
11 statement. They provided that to the
12 ASA's office -- the Assistant Secretary
13 of the Army for Civil Works, Mr. Connor.
14 They provided that to them in July of
15 2022. The ASA's office generated some
16 comments. Most of those comments were
17 resolved.

18 There were still some that were
19 unresolved, and they basically tasked the
20 Corps of Engineers -- in particular, the
21 Vicksburg District -- with trying to
22 complete and fill in those data gaps that
23 were identified as part of that in the
24 meeting.

25 And so what's next, if you will? So

1 we're collecting this -- your comments.
2 We're collecting the information. We are
3 in the process of filling in those data
4 gaps that I mentioned, and we will
5 provide to the Assistant Secretary of the
6 Army by the end -- end of August, so
7 he'll have it the first of September, and
8 there will be some follow up action. The
9 NEPA will be complete in January of 2024.

10 So with that, next slide, please.

11 I've got the slide right here. Okay.
12 And so here is our schedule for public
13 meetings. So this is the first session
14 of two sessions today here in Slidell.
15 There will be -- tomorrow will be -- the
16 24th, there will be a similar 1:00, 6:00
17 session there at the Spartan Auditorium
18 on Lakeland Drive in Jackson, and so
19 there will be one follow on meeting that
20 will be very similar to this one. There
21 will be a virtual public meeting that
22 will happen on the first of June -- a
23 similar 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. session.

24 So I mentioned earlier -- so I
25 mentioned earlier, if you can see at the

1 bottom of the page there, there are
2 multiple ways that you can provide
3 comments. There are comment cards out in
4 front. You can drop them in the box.
5 You can use regular mail if it's
6 available, and the address is up on the
7 screen, and then lastly, we have an email
8 that's set up for this project, and you
9 can see it's pearriverfrm@usace.army.mil.
10 And so we have a court reporter who's
11 taking notes, if you will, of the
12 transcription of this meeting.

13 Next slide, please. Okay. And now,
14 I'd like to reintroduce Ms. Colosimo.
15 Robyn is going to speak next with respect
16 to the project importance.

17 PRESENTATION

18 MS. COLOSIMO:

19 Just a sound check. Can folks hear me?
20 Bonus. As mentioned, I'm Robyn Colosimo, and
21 I work with the Assistant Secretary of the
22 Army for Civil Works Office. I just want to
23 thank everybody for being both here live and
24 online. We really look forward to working
25 with you all to garner your ideas and your

1 concerns about how to solve these flood risk
2 management problems in Jackson and the Pearl
3 drainage. We know that they've long plagued
4 communities, and it's been decades in the
5 making to get here today in many ways.

6 When I say I oversee project planning and
7 review, anything that comes through the Corps
8 that requires either Congressional
9 authorization or appropriation, and then
10 ultimately implementation has to come through
11 our office. So I have a fundamental
12 responsibility in that process to certify the
13 validity of those reports and those
14 recommendations that come through the Chief
15 of Engineers.

16 So it's a serious job, but done in
17 collaboration with the Corps to make sure
18 we're checking our responsibilities both
19 technically and feasibility-wise, right, so
20 that often depends upon where you sit. From
21 my view, in my experience, it's all about the
22 great -- certainly with great input and great
23 understanding of the opportunity before us.

24 I do work for Mike Connor, who is our
25 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil

1 Works, and I want to introduce him via video.
2 He has a short introduction here. He does --
3 did want to be here, was unable to do that
4 today and tomorrow, but has been on the
5 landscape and will continue to be, because
6 this is an important project to advance for
7 him with you all. So with that, can we shoot
8 the video? Thank you.

9 MIKE CONNOR:

10 (Via video) Hi, everyone. I'm Mike
11 Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army
12 for Civil Works. I collect policy
13 oversight and direction for the U.S. Army
14 Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program.
15 The purpose of this community meeting
16 session on solutions is to address
17 flooding along the Pearl River in
18 Mississippi. We look forward to hearing
19 from you about the need -- your needs and
20 concerns regarding flooding issues and
21 the proposed projects to address these
22 challenges.

23 As all of you know, the city of
24 Jackson, Mississippi has experienced
25 devastating floods as recently as 2020

1 and 2022. I saw firsthand some of this
2 flooding in August of last year in a
3 visit to discuss a proposed project.

4 It is a priority to provide the
5 people of Jackson with effective near-
6 term solutions to their flooding risks,
7 and we have a tremendous opportunity to
8 deliver these solutions in the Bipartisan
9 Infrastructure Law with funding provided
10 through that legislation. This
11 administration will set aside sufficient
12 funding to complete planning and
13 implementation of the plan consistent
14 with existing authorities, and in
15 compliance with federal environmental
16 laws.

17 Your input today will provide the
18 technical feedback needed to inform my
19 decision on the solution we will
20 implement to reduce flood risk in
21 Jackson. I appreciate your time today as
22 we work together to provide the best
23 solutions for the Corps to help Jackson
24 and this region of Mississippi. Thank
25 you very much for your time.

1 MS. COLOSIMO:

2 As a civil servant, I feel honored to
3 work for Mr. Connor for many reasons. He's a
4 vast -- important leader with vast experience
5 in solving complex water resources problems
6 at the federal and regional levels. And so
7 for those of you who don't know him, it's
8 important to have him involved in this
9 process.

10 And most notably, he's been in and out of
11 government over the years, including being
12 the Deputy Secretary of Interior in the Obama
13 administration, so we do leverage his
14 experience and understanding on how to see
15 these things to encompass the Corps'
16 responsibilities. As he said, he will
17 ultimately be the decision maker, and I'm
18 going to come back to that in a minute on why
19 that matters here, and he is, obviously, very
20 interested in engaging with you all. Next
21 slide, please.

22 Okay, so why are we here? We're here
23 because we want to advance a flood risk
24 management solution after decades of
25 repetitive flooding in Jackson. As you all

1 know -- and in many cases, probably have
2 experience -- for over a hundred years, we
3 have had water flooding in the Pearl River
4 that's caused disruptions to businesses and
5 industry throughout Jackson, Mississippi,
6 affecting more than 5,000 commercial and
7 residential structures, and impacts a
8 population of over 500,000.

9 The most notable events were in 1979,
10 1983, but as Mr. Connor referenced, we're
11 also aware of the ones in '20 and '22. In
12 fact, I was here with Mr. Connor on a visit
13 as the rains were starting in '22, and it was
14 fascinating to actually have been here and
15 leave the next day, and find out what
16 emerged. It felt really important at the
17 time, and continues to be in my mind.

18 In 1979, the event caused more than \$223
19 million dollars in damages, and those values
20 in today's world, that's a very large number
21 when updated. And of course, the highest
22 crest was in 2020, and particularly affected,
23 too, minority and low income areas of
24 Jackson. We also recognize the Pearl River
25 has tremendous environmental value, including

1 wetlands that filter waters that eventually
2 flow into the Gulf of Mexico, and support
3 thousands of geese, ducks, and migratory
4 birds.

5 For decades, the Corps and non-federal
6 interests have sought to solve the flood risk
7 management problem in Jackson, but a lack of
8 project justification, community support, and
9 funding has stalled meaningful progress. So
10 why do I say that? Funding is a really
11 important piece that Mr. Connor mentioned, is
12 that why we are here and the opportunity for
13 us has everything to do with the Bipartisan
14 Infrastructure Law and money being set aside
15 to address these long stalled issues in
16 Jackson.

17 So we want and look forward to working
18 with you all to solve these problems that
19 have long plagued communities with a view
20 towards what we can do to make things work,
21 and take advantage of this tremendous window
22 of opportunity. Next slide, please.

23 In terms of Congressional interest, just
24 to make sure we don't get too much into
25 alphabet soup, the Corps of Engineers only

1 undertakes things that Congress gives us
2 authorization and appropriate for. In Pearl,
3 and in Jackson in particular, it's
4 particularly interesting because we were
5 authorized, as the Corps of Engineers, as
6 early as 1986 to construct a project to
7 resolve the flood issues that emerged in
8 1979.

9 In 2007, Congress modified that
10 authorization to plan, design, and ultimately
11 implement a project to allow the Assistant
12 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to make
13 an approval of that plan, and that was what
14 Mr. Connor referred to in his comments. Why
15 does that matter? Because we don't have to
16 go back to Congress if he meets the
17 requirements Congress gave him in that
18 authorization in 2007.

19 In 2018, as referenced, there was also
20 additional direction given to the Secretary
21 that we should make sure that that analysis
22 includes any potential downstream impacts,
23 because that had been a voice of concern for
24 many of you over time, so we obviously are
25 very interested in understanding those

1 concerns and making sure we have them fully
2 considered by the Corps.

3 Bottom line, up front: we need a plan
4 that we can execute that represents the
5 technical needs, the community needs, the
6 flood resilience that meet the standards set
7 by Congress, and consistent with
8 environmental laws.

9 So what's now and what's different? I've
10 already said it's a tremendous opportunity
11 that's created by the Bipartisan
12 Infrastructure Law. We really want to
13 advance a solution that can happen, and
14 really, the big thing is because we have
15 authority and we have appropriations and we
16 can go through a determination process by my
17 boss to determine what should be implemented
18 consistent with those things, we can actually
19 quickly move to design the implementation in
20 ways that it has not been able to move
21 forward in the past, so I can't emphasize
22 enough how many communities would like to be
23 in that position.

24 So we're excited to reinvigorate the
25 technical and community work to deliver for

1 Jackson. We look forward to working with all
2 of you, and this is our early engagement to
3 begin that process. So I know many of you
4 are curious why we were here and what's
5 happening, and this is the initiation of what
6 we intend to be able to deliver in a
7 collaborative process. And with that, I'm
8 going to turn this over to Colonel Klein to
9 walk through some more detailed slides.

10 Thank you.

11 COLONEL KLEIN:

12 Thank you, ma'am, and good afternoon,
13 ladies and gentlemen. I'm Colonel Chris
14 Klein, the Commander of the Vicksburg
15 District and the Pearl River Watershed
16 Servicing Commander, as well as the oversight
17 for this project.

18 So we know that Pearl River has a long
19 history of navigation and flood control
20 projects associated with it, and really, the
21 story of flood control in Jackson includes
22 the initial levee construction that was
23 constructed in 1968. And then in 1979, there
24 was a flood event, and since then, multiple
25 locally proposed as well as USACE proposed

1 solutions were brought forward for
2 consideration as to how to relieve flooding
3 for the people of Jackson.

4 The latest locally presented projects
5 plan was proposed -- was prepared under
6 Section 211 of the Water Resources
7 Development Act of 1996, as were other
8 locally presented plans, all reviewed and
9 presented directly to the Secretary for
10 consideration for implementation, and that
11 brings us to our work here today. Next
12 slide, please.

13 So what have we been charged to do? Our
14 latest efforts started at the end of last
15 year at the direction of the Secretary. Our
16 mission is to build off of all previous work
17 and develop a report that assesses an array
18 of options for technical feasibility,
19 environmental acceptability, and legal
20 compliance.

21 And right now we have two -- the two most
22 critical items that we're working on now,
23 first, is to identify the National Economic
24 Development Plan. So what this is, the
25 National Economic Development Plan, is the

1 plan that has the greatest benefit to meet
2 national economic growth priorities, and that
3 is the plan against which all other plans
4 will be assessed, to assure that the same
5 amount of flood risk mitigation is being
6 provided by those plans -- if not equal, then
7 more. The next thing we have to do is
8 complete our environmental compliance
9 activities.

10 So like I mentioned, NED plans are going
11 to be the baseline against which all
12 alternatives must perform, and each one of
13 those options has to provide as much, if not
14 greater, flood protection in the study area.
15 In addition, our report is also going to take
16 a look at an analysis of comprehensive
17 benefits. These comprehensive benefits are
18 twofold: they're both quantitative and
19 qualitative, so we're going even beyond just
20 the economic numbers to take a look at what
21 benefits each one of the different arrays can
22 provide to the city of Jackson.

23 Just as a reminder, the Corps of
24 Engineers and myself, we're neither a
25 proponent or opponent of any one project.

1 What we want to do is we want to deliver
2 flood risk management solutions for the
3 people of Jackson. Now let's turn it over to
4 Leslie, who's going to take us through where
5 we are technically with the projects.

6 MS. PROCHASKA:

7 Thank you. Leslie Prochaska, Plan
8 Formulator, regionally, here in the
9 Mississippi River Valley District Division
10 South. So the non-federal interest, Rankin-
11 Hinds, prepared the report, and that report
12 did build upon historical studies, as
13 mentioned. Over 60 different flood reduction
14 features were evaluated and looked at.

15 At the conclusion of that report, three
16 plans were identified for further assessment:
17 a non-structural plan, a levee plan, and a
18 channel improvement plan. The non-structural
19 plan consisted of relocating structures and
20 buying the land upon which the structures
21 were located for the 500 year flood event.
22 The levee plan included upgrading existing
23 levees, construction of additional levee
24 segments and or flood walls in unprotected
25 areas, and addition of pumps and gated

1 structures.

2 The channel improvement plan, which was
3 the NFI Rankin-Hinds preferred plan that was
4 presented in the report, consists of
5 excavation to increase the channel capacity,
6 demolition of the existing weir that's near
7 the J.H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant, and
8 construction of a new weir. That new weir
9 would have a flow gate and a fish passage.
10 That new weir would be located further
11 downstream, and we'll show that in the study
12 map.

13 They also proposed locations for
14 placement of excavated material, upgrading of
15 existing non-federal levee to federalize it
16 to a ring levee around the Savannah Street
17 Wastewater Treatment Plant. Next slide.

18 Since that report submittal, the U.S.
19 Army Corps of Engineers and Rankin-Hinds are
20 working collaboratively on a new report that
21 will provide a comparison of flood risk
22 management alternatives. The U.S. Army Corps
23 of Engineers is going to be lead author
24 preparing a draft environmental impact
25 statement that will identify the National

1 Economic Development Plan as discussed,
2 compare the level of flood protection
3 provided by that plan to the level of flood
4 protection provided to all the alternatives
5 being assessed. Additionally, the report is
6 going to look at the downstream impacts and
7 see if there are any in the Pearl River
8 Basin.

9 The comparison of plans will not only
10 include the non-federal interest Section 211
11 final plans; it'll also include the
12 additional plans, which includes revised non-
13 structural plan that will likely include
14 elevation of structures, as well as flood
15 proofing.

16 And then we talked about the combination
17 thereof, so there's going to be other plans
18 that will be assessed. The combination of
19 can be a combination of the channel
20 improvement plan, maybe a non-structural
21 plan. There's other possibilities, based on
22 the feedback, and built upon the historical
23 information.

24 The report, again, is not going to make a
25 recommendation; rather, it's going to provide

1 a comparison of alternatives so the Assistant
2 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works may
3 describe -- may decide the range of flood
4 risk management options. Next slide.

5 So we talk about the study area. So the
6 Pearl River Watershed is huge. It's over
7 8,000 square miles. Where we are authorized
8 and focused on for this study area is going
9 to be between River Mile 270, which is just
10 south of Richland, Mississippi, to River Mile
11 302 to the north, which is where the Ross
12 Barnett Reservoir Dam is located. So that is
13 the area and its associated tributaries right
14 adjacent where we are trying to achieve the
15 flood risk reduction. Next slide.

16 So as mentioned about comprehensive
17 benefits, also includes areas of interest.
18 So there's several areas of interest that
19 have been preliminarily identified and listed
20 on the slide. We're looking at the -- this
21 is where we're looking for public feedback as
22 well, regarding the areas of interests: the
23 ones that we have -- don't have listed, and
24 any additional new information, and your
25 feedback on the ones that have been

1 identified.

2 Those that have been identified in
3 addition to flood risk are water supply,
4 water wastewater treatment, ecosystem and
5 environmental impacts, existing waste sites,
6 cultural resources, transportation,
7 downstream impacts, recreational access and
8 opportunities, community impacts, and
9 economic opportunities. This list is not
10 limited. All right, Colonel Klein.

11 COLONEL KLEIN:

12 Thanks, Leslie. So that takes us to
13 where we are today, and the technical team's
14 work continues. We've got -- and we're here
15 today to receive your feedback that we can
16 then also include in the final report. We'll
17 also answer any questions that we know the
18 answers to at this point, otherwise, we are
19 committed to getting back to you. There will
20 be multiple opportunities to review the work
21 that's being done.

22 By the end of August, we intend to
23 complete a draft report, with a final report
24 due in December. And that draft report,
25 again, going out for -- going out for review

1 so that we are open and transparent through
2 this process. And then in January, that's
3 when the secretary is scheduled to review all
4 work done at this point, and then render his
5 decision.

6 As you can see, this is a really
7 streamlined timeline. We'd like to thank the
8 Assistant Secretary's office for guiding us
9 through this process, keeping us focused on
10 getting the work done, because what we all
11 have to be cognizant of is that we are
12 building on years of work -- many, many years
13 of work up to this point. Now is the time to
14 put a bow on it and deliver some flood risk
15 management to the city of Jackson. If you
16 don't have any further comments at this
17 point, we'll turn it back over to our
18 moderator. Thanks, Tom.

19 TOM SHAW:

20 Thank you, sir. Okay. So kind of
21 going back to what we first talked about,
22 we are here to collect feedback. We are
23 here to collect input from you folks, and
24 so I mentioned there are several ways to
25 do this. The email is up there. We're

1 going to leave this slide up as people
2 are coming up and discussing, but there's
3 the email address, there's the physical
4 address.

5 Like I said, there are comment cards
6 outside, and there's actually a project
7 website that's down at the bottom here
8 for you to see the information that's out
9 there. As we move along and as we get
10 information that we can put out there, we
11 will update that project website.

12 So with that, if you would, would you
13 bring the house lights up, please, and we
14 are going to begin collecting some
15 feedback from you, the audience. So I
16 will just ask -- there are microphones
17 here on either aisle. If you would, come
18 up. Please wait for me to recognize you.
19 We'll get you going so you can ask
20 questions.

21 Try to limit those to three minutes
22 for your question and input, and then if
23 for some reason we run out of time --
24 we've basically got a two hour window, so
25 I'm looking at about 1:35 now, so we're

1 good until about 3:00. If anybody still
2 has not had the opportunity to provide
3 input, there are multiple ways to do it,
4 like on the screen. We would love for
5 you to catch somebody outside and talk.
6 So with that, we adjourn. The mics
7 should be hot, so if you've got
8 questions, I would just ask that you
9 please come up and -- yep?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

11 Tom, I want to let people know that
12 on the board out front, there's a QR code
13 you can scan on your cell phone that will
14 take you to the project webpage, so you
15 don't have to type in the whole thing.
16 Just scan that QR code.

17 TOM SHAW:

18 There you go. Technology at its
19 best.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

21 I just want to let everybody know I'm
22 going to upload this presentation to the
23 website, hopefully Thursday night, so
24 you'll have that to look at more closely.

25 TOM SHAW:

1 Okay. Questions? Sir, if you would
2 -- if you would -- if you don't mind,
3 tell us your name and where you're from.

4 PUBLIC COMMENT

5 DRAKE MELLOTT:

6 Sure. Drake Mellott, I live here in
7 Slidell near the bayou, which is down there
8 by Jones Creek. First of all, thank you for
9 coming in person and giving us an opportunity
10 to ask some questions. That makes a big
11 difference to all of us, to know you've been
12 there. I know in your slides, you list
13 basically all the things you're considering,
14 and I understand this, but I'm just curious
15 about Jones Creek and the mitigation of
16 flooding there.

17 From what I understand, all the Pearls --
18 all the branches of the Pearl -- has seen a
19 dramatic increase in flooding over the last
20 three years. Whether you call it flooding or
21 not flooding as a described event, you know,
22 it's still greatly increased in my short time
23 here, compared to some other people who were
24 probably here 25 years in the same location
25 from 20 years ago, or year 1 through 20.

1 I've seen saltwater over my dock and
2 seawall from other than a tropical storm or
3 hurricane, or you know, a once every 15 year
4 flood that we've got like five years ago
5 hardly ever. I mean, you know, usually, 11
6 months and two weeks a year, not an issue at
7 all, then we have a storm season.

8 In the last three years, I probably see
9 water over the dock for at least three months
10 -- March, April, and May. So we're -- and I
11 asked a couple other guys today were they
12 doing a statement; they did. Probably in the
13 last three or four years, March, April, May,
14 where we live, we're seeing a foot to a foot
15 and a half more water than we're used to
16 seeing.

17 When I look up there and I see, you know,
18 channel widening and all those things that
19 help with flood mitigation, that means more
20 water downstream, in my interpretation. Can
21 you address that, at least, to see if there's
22 any path down here that you perceive --
23 either improvement, or making it worse? You
24 know, I don't know what's a good answer. We
25 just kind of want that input.

1 MS. COLOSIMO:

2 All right. So we're going to tag
3 team here. So thanks for that thoughtful
4 question and thank you for being here.
5 That's what we're supposed to do, and we
6 all appreciate that more than ever post-
7 COVID world, honestly, is that you can't
8 really see it unless you're here. As
9 someone from DC, I get it. It's really
10 important.

11 DRAKE MELLOTT:

12 You work in DC too much, I know.

13 MS. COLOSIMO:

14 There you go. All right, love that.
15 So first of all, love your comments. Do
16 definitely want to get them in writing as
17 well, right. So you and your friends, if
18 you have a kind of "where I have seen
19 this change," I think that's always
20 helpful. The engineer in me appreciates
21 that.

22 I want the Colonel and Leslie to talk
23 to it as well, as they see fit, but I
24 just want to remind you, too, that in any
25 analysis the Corps of Engineers does,

1 we've always done with sensitivity to the
2 emerging trends; right? And so
3 everywhere we go, it's going to be
4 upstream, downstream, tributaries -- all
5 those things.

6 So I think yeah, we're going to
7 answer that question and we're not
8 looking to pass water through and flood
9 somewhere else, because that only leads
10 to more problems for you and for more
11 work to be done by the agency. We're
12 going to make it as whole as we can, so
13 that's part of the analysis. I'll let
14 the Colonel talk to that.

15 COLONEL KLEIN:

16 Tack on to the -- before I hand it
17 over to Leslie, the expert -- so we're
18 running the -- we have the hydraulic
19 model. The model set up right now, it
20 does include the downstream effects, and
21 that will be part of the analysis. So we
22 do have -- it is a comprehensive model,
23 both locally as well as through the
24 downstream.

25 Where we are technically with the

1 modeling right now doesn't include all
2 the structural alternatives yet. That's
3 what's forthcoming, should be in the next
4 couple of weeks. We should get the
5 results of that and we'll have a better
6 of what's going on downstream.

7 By law, I think 1176 requires us to
8 do it, and it will be considered and that
9 is something that we'll have, certainly,
10 in the final report, sir.

11 DRAKE MELLOTT:

12 If I can interrupt with another
13 question: does your modeling include any
14 kind of surge capability for holding back
15 water when there's a tropical storm or
16 hurricane? Thanks.

17 MS. PROCHASKA:

18 So for this model, for where our
19 study area is, to the extent of it, it
20 will go to the extent to the southern
21 boundary condition. That southern
22 boundary condition is where it's
23 determined that there's no transferred
24 flood risk, or there's no hydraulic
25 impact further. This one does not extend

1 that far.

2 As far as to the answer, I believe
3 that we can verify that. We will verify
4 that, but there are other models that we
5 have that are studying the lower half of
6 the Pearl River, where the flooding --
7 but I -- I wouldn't -- but our models
8 will show and determine if surge could be
9 potentially impactful up there in
10 Jackson.

11 COLONEL KLEIN:

12 Do you want to take that, or me
13 first?

14 MS. COLOSIMO:

15 You can go first.

16 COLONEL KLEIN:

17 Okay. So thanks a lot, sir. I
18 appreciate the consideration about storm
19 surge and accounting for that, and I
20 think we can certainly add that in as
21 part of the comprehensive benefits that
22 we're looking at to make sure that we
23 weigh -- include and weigh that in as one
24 of those qualitative and quantitative
25 things that we can include in the report,

1 too. So I will certainly make a note of
2 that.

3 DRAKE MELLOTT:

4 You can say the concern is that, you
5 know, if we get sent water down at the
6 same time we get a high tide, then we're
7 toast, in laymen's terms; right?

8 MS. COLOSIMO:

9 Sure, sure. I did want to just add
10 one little piece, which is -- and this is
11 not atypical, right -- is that in terms
12 of infrastructure that already exists, in
13 any part of the country, we have to look
14 at how those systems currently operate
15 for their legislative purpose, whether
16 it's ours, or the state's, or local.

17 So in terms of holding back water,
18 the modeling would only encompass what
19 it's mandated to do. Now, we all know
20 under certain extreme conditions,
21 entities, including ourself, have
22 permission to operate differently to hold
23 back water that's unprecedented, but we
24 start with how they currently operate and
25 don't make judgments about whether they

1 can do it differently, and then we move
2 to sensitivity. So I think I heard that
3 embedded in there. I just wanted to kind
4 of get that point out.

5 DRAKE MELLOTT:

6 Okay. Appreciate it. Thank you.

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 Sure.

9 JOHN CANENBERG:

10 Yes. My name is John Canenberg. I'm
11 from New Orleans.

12 COLONEL KLEIN:

13 Yes, sir.

14 JOHN CANENBERG:

15 I've been tracking this plan for a while.
16 I have a particular concern about the One
17 Lake development idea. They are already
18 advertising in the Jackson area lots. I
19 wonder if in the National Economic Plan that
20 you say sort of has its hands in this, is the
21 potential increase in value along the lake
22 that will be created in any way attributed
23 back to those that will be displaced, and do
24 those displaced people have any priority on
25 the lots at some sensible value?

1 MS. COLOSIMO:

2 So we're going to tag team again.
3 Having not seen the advertisements you're
4 talking about, it's a fundamental matter
5 of policy -- and particularly my boss --
6 we're not looking to make investments
7 that drive people away from their homes
8 in any way, shape, or form. And so we're
9 not looking to change the demographics or
10 who owns the land. I understand you're
11 saying there's advertising there. I'm
12 not privy to where that is, but we would
13 certainly look to understand that
14 challenge that's emerging there.

15 But my boss is not looking to make
16 sure we're driving people off their land;
17 he's looking to make sure we protect
18 them, no matter what strata they come
19 from. One thing I do need to mention
20 here is that this a pretty strong
21 priority for the administration, but my
22 boss in particular. He is a Native
23 American and he feels very strongly about
24 this issue, and so I think we're going to
25 make sure a full range of alternatives

1 are considered, including those
2 communities that, perhaps, felt they were
3 driven out or not included in the
4 analysis.

5 JOHN CANENBERG:

6 Will there be a development allowed
7 along the created lakeshore?

8 MS. COLOSIMO:

9 So I think we need to answer this
10 question, because when you talk about
11 specifics, I have to be careful because I
12 don't know where you're talking about.
13 But I would say as an outsider coming in,
14 as a matter of policy, we don't look to
15 subsidize the development of those areas.

16 If there's a federal project, those
17 lands have to be encompassed, largely
18 speaking, in title, and so I don't --
19 we'd have to understand the issues more.
20 I would like to know more about it, but
21 we do not -- we generally do title
22 appeasements.

23 JOHN CANENBERG:

24 Thank you.

25 COLONEL KLEIN:

1 Do you have anything?

2 MS. PROCHASKA:

3 I will add to that. So the National
4 Economic Development Plan, when we
5 identify that, the inputs that goes into
6 it is it's calculated based on the flood
7 risk reduction. So it's whatever the
8 flood risk reduction benefits go to
9 indemnify the National Economic
10 Development Plan.

11 The comprehensive benefit is another
12 category that will be assessed and will
13 be presented in the report, or the ASA
14 decision -- the Secretary -- but for
15 identification of the National Economic
16 Development Plan, it is what is the
17 reduction of damages to Pearl River. The
18 reduction of damages from flooding is how
19 it's calculated.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

21 You done? Yeah. I'm wondering if the
22 widening and dredging is going to come down
23 here also on the plan, or is that just for
24 that area up there?

25 MS. PROCHASKA:

1 Okay. So it's limited to the -- when
2 you're talking about the study area,
3 we're talking about River Mile 270, which
4 is by Ridgeland, Mississippi, to -- it
5 could go to channel improvements all the
6 way up to the Barnett Reservoir Dam, so
7 that's the area of focus. So Ridgeland,
8 Mississippi would be the furthest south,
9 right now, for the channel improvement
10 plan.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

12 Any plans for down here?

13 MS. PROCHASKA:

14 That would be outside this particular
15 study area, but there are other studies
16 that the Corps is involved in right now
17 that are looking into down here.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

19 One more thing: and when they open
20 the water up in Jackson and it comes down
21 here, what's going to happen when they
22 open that one up and more water comes?

23 MS. PROCHASKA:

24 So that -- with the hydraulic
25 modeling that we're doing, there's --

1 that's going to be assessed. Every
2 different -- the different plans that are
3 being identified, they will assess the
4 rift and the down project conditions, and
5 will address downstream effects. That's
6 definitely going to be evaluated.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

8 Okay. Thank you.

9 COLONEL KLEIN:

10 Sir, there's another -- you can also
11 reach out to -- whichever side of the
12 river, either Representative Scalise or
13 Representative Ezell -- and ask them to
14 ask us to look into, you know, a
15 potential study for doing dredging and
16 widening and that kind of stuff down
17 here.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

19 Okay. My mom's been here since '89.
20 In the past three years, her place that
21 she was living at is completely
22 underwater now constantly, so that's why
23 I was just asking that question.

24 COLONEL KLEIN:

25 That's a great question, sir. I

1 appreciate it.

2 MS. COLOSIMO:

3 Please share that on the info.

4 TOM SHAW:

5 Sir?

6 WADE MIZELL:

7 Wade Mizell, Washington Parish, Bogalusa.
8 As far as the One Lake project, as you know,
9 the Ross Barnett already holds back water,
10 and if they build another reservoir below the
11 Ross Barnett, in order to fill that up, they
12 would have to hold back water also. So the
13 Pearl River is already shallow during the
14 summer months.

15 What's going to happen -- I mean, you
16 know, we have trouble with flooding, but when
17 you're in a drought, you're also going to
18 have a problem with the river drying up if
19 you have two reservoirs holding back water.
20 So what's going to happen to us? I have a
21 camp on a canal, and so you know, it's going
22 to get to the point where you can't even run
23 a boat with a motor on the river.

24 MS. PROCHASKA:

25 That's -- yeah. That's a very --

1 thank you. That's -- thank you for that.
2 So part of the design in the plan that
3 was proposed in the Rankin-Hinds report
4 is to include a low flow gate to try to
5 sustain normal conditions, as water is
6 available. So when it would -- it would
7 flow naturally, by gravity, through that
8 low flow gate, so it wouldn't be
9 hindered.

10 It will hold back once it reaches a
11 certain level of height within the water
12 column, but if the water's there, it's
13 going to allow -- the new weir, for it to
14 flow, because you know, sometimes it's
15 dropping. Well, not totally dry, but
16 yeah, very valid concern.

17 WADE MIZELL:

18 Well, we all know they don't have
19 priority, you know, as far as trying to
20 get the reservoirs full, and I do know
21 that Georgia and Florida encountered a
22 scenario that's as far as Pearl River and
23 the Rigolets. Apalachicola oysters --
24 Georgia -- the state of Georgia put a dam
25 on one of their fresh water rivers, and

1 to have oysters, you need brackish water.
2 We all know that.

3 Well, when they put the dam up, it
4 annihilated the oysters in Apalachicola.
5 You go to Florida, you have Louisiana,
6 Alabama, Mississippi oysters. They
7 destroyed that industry. My point being,
8 you know, you don't get the salinity -- I
9 mean, you don't get the brackish water in
10 the Rigolets, you're going to be
11 destroying oysters, crabs, and so on and
12 so forth.

13 COLONEL KLEIN:

14 Sir, again, you're absolutely right.
15 It's great -- that speaks to part of this
16 as the environmental concerns. So the
17 environmental concern is you're changing
18 the salinity of the water, it impacting
19 what habitats are there, and part of our
20 environmental impacts in the
21 environmental impact review is ensuring
22 that we preserve the habitat as it is,
23 and to mitigate thereof. So yeah, please
24 -- we will look into this, certainly.

25 MS. COLOSIMO:

1 Yeah. Just another thing to focus on
2 is that the changing climate, right --
3 not a political term; a technical term,
4 right? So the highs and lows matter, and
5 that is certainly something from my boss
6 that is very important. He comes from
7 western water, right, and so drought --
8 our agency is involved in that and
9 thinking about our projects with
10 presuming water is going to be lower and
11 higher.

12 How do we think about those ranges in
13 any investment? So what you highlight
14 here just about the low water, what we're
15 already seeing is something we want to
16 make sure we're addressing -- are we
17 making it worse; are we helping? Those
18 kind of things. Thank you for that.

19 COLONEL KLEIN:

20 So sir, if you could, on the comment
21 cards, tell us exactly where that is so
22 that we can take a look at where it is on
23 the map, and then, you know, be able to
24 do our environmental analysis on that in
25 that particular area specifically with

1 the oysters, your canal, camp, and
2 flooding. Thanks, sir.

3 WADE MIZELL:

4 Sure, okay. It's where the sills and
5 the locks are. You know, Lock 1, 2, and
6 3.

7 COLONEL KLEIN:

8 Thank you.

9 TOM SHAW:

10 Sir, I was just given an update with
11 respect to the storm surge, particularly
12 related to hurricanes. That's the St.
13 Tammany Parish Study that's actually
14 being done.

15 COLONEL KLEIN:

16 New Orleans District.

17 MS. PROCHASKA:

18 I think that one's going to be
19 released publicly, actually, in the next
20 few months. There are revised links on
21 that one.

22 JACK SESSIONS:

23 How are we doing today, folks? My name's
24 Jack Sessions. I live right here in Pearl
25 River myself -- been there for 20-something

1 years -- and I remember the day that this all
2 came about. I was at the first meeting, I
3 think, in 2013, and correct me if I'm wrong,
4 but the number one question was when they
5 build this retention pond, is this going to
6 be strictly for flood control, or is there
7 going to be houses and lots being sold on
8 this retention pond?

9 Because I was very confused and everybody
10 else was last time we talked about it. They
11 said, "We can't answer that question. We
12 don't know if they're going to develop it."
13 That's what our thing is thinking, that
14 they're going to -- it's going to be to
15 benefit somebody's pocket, not flood control.
16 So is that -- are they going to build houses
17 on this lake or retention pond? Yes, or no.

18 MS. COLOSIMO:

19 Okay. Let me start with the highest
20 level, and then we'll go to the actual
21 technical level, but this is an important
22 concept; right? In this study, we've
23 heard this a lot, and I'm going to echo
24 what Leslie said, which is we are an
25 engineering agency. We focus on flood

1 risk management, navigation, water supply
2 -- those kind of things.

3 We are not looking to create
4 development. We are creating
5 opportunities for flood risk that could
6 encompass One Lake, as well as other
7 things we've talked about, and a few
8 other great ideas we want to hear from
9 you. But we are not in proponency of
10 creating lots that get sold to create a
11 specific economy. If those project
12 features encompass land, we have to
13 encompass them in that project.

14 So what that -- broader, though, is
15 the community -- what a project like this
16 could do for the broader community. I
17 don't think that's necessarily about
18 selling lots. It is about solidifying
19 Jackson's economy to continue to exist,
20 right, in a low lying area. That's more
21 about the government and the city itself,
22 but I don't have the details beyond that.
23 I know we're going to study this to make
24 sure.

25 COLONEL KLEIN:

1 And so when we take a look at it,
2 it's specifically to make sure that we
3 are implementing the flood risk map and
4 flood risk reduction. And so, you know,
5 what we see right now is that as the
6 water comes in, it backs up up the
7 tributaries that are all going into that
8 area. So our focus right now with
9 whatever projects it is is to reduce the
10 impacts upon those tributaries.

11 Along with that, as Ms. Colosimo
12 mentioned, we -- you know, we purchase
13 land and gain title to lands that are
14 required for us to manage our project,
15 and then those become federal lands;
16 right? Whatever project is built,
17 whatever it may be -- you can look at --
18 you know, go up along the river, there'll
19 be a whole bunch of levees along the Red
20 River in Louisiana with walking community
21 paths, and because of the protection
22 that's provided, there's some -- there is
23 business development adjacent to those
24 levees that were built there.

25 So it is plausible that whatever is

1 built, because of the level of flood risk
2 mitigation that's provided, could result
3 in business development because it's more
4 economically feasible to stand up a
5 business or even a residential community
6 because you're receiving protection.

7 JACK SESSIONS:

8 So no residential -- at this
9 particular time, there's no kind of
10 foresight for building residential houses
11 and all around this lake?

12 COLONEL KLEIN:

13 That would be outside of what we
14 study, so -- I think it would be the
15 county that would be studying that type
16 of stuff. So we're focused on what is
17 the flood risk, flood risk management
18 associated with the project. Does it
19 deliver that level of flood risk
20 management?

21 We will own, you know, title and
22 deed, those properties that are
23 associated with the project. When you're
24 on the dry side, now, you have -- you now
25 have land that is -- like talking about

1 the NED Plan.

2 So what the NED Plan focuses on is
3 now that you have this level of flood
4 risk management -- you're keeping water
5 off of people's homes, businesses, out of
6 industrial parks and what have you in the
7 city of Jackson -- naturally, to the
8 point of property values, that changes
9 the value of the property both
10 potentially monetarily, certainly
11 intrinsically.

12 You know, it changes how much flood
13 insurance you have to buy. It also gives
14 the county and the city an opportunity
15 now to develop those areas that are no
16 longer prone to flooding, and how they
17 develop those lands in the county for
18 private is how they would develop them.
19 But we're not studying -- so that's not
20 part of our study as to what happens with
21 those now protected lands.

22 JACK SESSIONS:

23 So when y'all actually purchase that
24 land -- I guess, the federal government
25 -- so the question is, is it's never

1 going to be a residential land? Maybe
2 business, but not residential; right?

3 MS. COLOSIMO:

4 So I think this is important: we
5 can't answer in detail; right? So we
6 need to hear your comment, understand
7 exactly what you're concerned about. I
8 hear it here, but we're going to make
9 sure it's on the Record, so anything else
10 we have to write down, it's hugely
11 important.

12 What I want to say is every state and
13 every county we deal with in the nation,
14 the problem is the same about who is
15 responsible for land use, planning, and
16 management. We will make sure that's
17 addressed, in terms of where that lies,
18 if there's an ongoing update. We're not
19 encouraging that, but that may be a
20 separate and related process that's going
21 on in general in having to encompass any
22 future plans, including roads and all
23 those things.

24 So we want to make sure that's
25 encompassed in our analysis and what we

1 no about that. But no, we are not
2 looking to force any of those ideas.
3 Maybe counties or parishes or whoever has
4 the land use authority is considering
5 that.

6 JACK SESSIONS:

7 All right. Thank you.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

9 There are FEMA restrictions along
10 flood ways also.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 Oh, right. Anything in a flood way,
13 by the way, is regulated by the Federal
14 Emergency Management Agency, and we do
15 that in tandem with letting them know
16 where those lines are, both pre and post
17 projects. Thank you for that.

18 TOM SHAW:

19 Sir?

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

21 So my concern is how is this flood
22 management? Can you explain that? Is it --
23 I mean, are y'all talking about the Ross
24 Barnett, or is it going to be, you know, at
25 static levels? Surge? You know, if you

1 could help explain that, that would be ideal.

2 COLONEL KLEIN:

3 So do you want to start?

4 MS. PROCHASKA:

5 Sure. When you excavate within the
6 channel area, it's creating more storage,
7 so that does create more storage and more
8 volume that can be held. So the weir
9 would have underwater, like, low flow
10 gate, so that will allow the water to
11 pass through.

12 When it gets up to a certain height,
13 it's going to hold anything back without
14 that water column, and then when it gets
15 to a certain height above the weir, if
16 we're in a flood stage, it will then pass
17 over that. But it does create more
18 storage to hold back from flood risk
19 reduction.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

21 So it won't be a static level? It'll
22 go up and down?

23 MS. PROCHASKA:

24 Yes.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

1 So it won't be like the Ross Barnett,
2 where they just maintain at 297?

3 MS. PROCHASKA:

4 I'm not --

5 COLONEL KLEIN:

6 Right. And with -- Ross Barnett's a
7 tough -- a tough one to compare it to
8 because there is a water control manual
9 associated with the Ross Barnett, so that
10 when we -- when there is going to be a
11 heavy rain surge up in Northeast
12 Mississippi, they can release ahead of
13 that so the reservoir can take more.

14 Understand that they maintain it at
15 297 so that O.B. Curtis can draw the
16 water off of that; right? So there's a
17 certain water -- there's a certain level
18 that is always maintained in order to
19 maintain the water supply, right, for the
20 city. But then they can draw it up and
21 down, you know, to receive from the
22 Northeast.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

24 So you're going to, you know, take
25 out the swings that we see right now?

1 Like I'm looking at the Columbia gauge,
2 it goes from 16 -- it'll swing seven
3 feet, so it'll kind of moderate that, or
4 it'll be static like the Ross Barnett --
5 water in, water out?

6 MS. COLOSIMO:

7 So I think that's part of our
8 analysis; right?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

10 That's part of your analysis?

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 Right. So let me make sure we get a
13 comment card from you so we capture it
14 correctly. And then I think this is the
15 thing: your concern is documented. This
16 is why we want to know what your concern
17 is. We may not have the answers today,
18 but we can make sure that we are clear on
19 what we know about that analysis of that
20 plan, which is recommended by Rankin-
21 Hinds.

22 When we go through this analysis, we
23 may find there are some moderations that
24 are worthy of consideration to mitigate
25 some of those concerns. So we'll figure

1 out your concern, understand it based on
2 what you told us, and make sure we're
3 being as visible as we can about that --
4 what we know and what we don't know.

5 COLONEL KLEIN:

6 And so I'll take as, essentially, a
7 question of will the weir stabilize surge
8 flows downstream, in particular the
9 Columbia gauge -- the one that you were
10 talking about?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

12 Right. Well, I have a camp at
13 Columbia, but here in Slidell, it's like
14 everybody's saying -- we're concerned
15 about the downstream effects.

16 COLONEL KLEIN:

17 Okay. Thanks.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

19 Because right now, when the Ross
20 Barnett -- I mean, when it gets up high,
21 it gets to 298, it's coming. It is
22 coming, and we're -- you know, we're
23 toast. That's all there is to it, you
24 know.

25 And from a political aspect, we're

1 thinking, well, they're just maintaining
2 the boat houses and the docks and all
3 the, you know, millionaire properties
4 that are on the Ross Barnett. We don't
5 need another one of those lakes. We need
6 a retention pond, not a lake.

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 Appreciate you explaining that
9 derivation there, and we'll make sure we
10 some answers.

11 TOM SHAW:

12 Thank you. Ma'am?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

14 Yeah, I just have a few, why not. Number
15 one, we're talking about you're going to
16 construct another weir. So in 1996, the Army
17 Corps of Engineers built a weir -- we call it
18 the Diversion at Walkiah Bluff. This is at
19 the flux of the Pearl where it splits into
20 the East Pearl at Holmes Bayou. So you built
21 it in 1996 after you done all your studies
22 and your little models, and then guess what?
23 Instead of it splitting water 50-50, like you
24 studied and modeled for it to do, it split
25 the water 70-30. I'm sure y'all are familiar

1 with that: yea or nay?

2 So now, today, the weir is falling apart,
3 the river is blown out on both sides of it,
4 and guess what you say now? "We have no
5 money to fix it." Okay, so then we have a
6 canal. We have a canal between Lock 1, 2,
7 and 3. My grandfather helped build it
8 starting in 1935.

9 Now, our lock structures and the levees
10 on that canal are falling apart, so I guess
11 I'm struggling with why we should listen to
12 y'all and your studies and all these reports,
13 and you come in here and you build something
14 else that you can't guarantee is going to
15 work like it should, no different than the
16 Diversion at Walkiah, and then you have -- if
17 you do build something and it messes up
18 something, you don't have the money to fix
19 it.

20 So I just think that instead of building
21 more things, that the United States Army
22 Corps of Engineers should take care of what
23 they've already built in the Pearl River
24 Basin instead of constructing more problems
25 in the basin. That's number one.

1 Number two: number two is you're talking
2 about widening a channel within your study
3 area. How many miles is your study area?

4 MS. PROCHASKA:

5 So the focus area would be 270 to 302
6 for the river miles.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

8 Okay. So 200-something of a 414 mile
9 long river?

10 MS. PROCHASKA:

11 No. 207 to 302, so approximately
12 about a little under 30 by 30 miles.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

14 So two-thirds?

15 MS. PROCHASKA:

16 No, 30 by 30 miles.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

18 Okay. Regardless -- okay.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

20 So I'm not an engineer like you people,
21 but I do have a lot of common sense, and I do
22 believe that, unfortunately, once you go
23 through college so many years and become
24 engineers, you forget things like common
25 sense.

1 My father was a ditch digger for St.
2 Tammany Parish and my son is a ditch digger
3 for St. Tammany Parish. Imagine the Pearl as
4 a 414 mile long ditch; okay? The ditch is
5 clogged up. The ditch is full of debris.
6 The ditch is silted in. We have serious
7 streaming and erosion that's just silting the
8 river in.

9 We have the four guys back here that's
10 pushing for the project. I had the
11 opportunity about eight years ago to bring
12 them on the Pearl out of Lock 1. They rolled
13 up their pants and they pushed my boat out of
14 the canal and back in the canal because we
15 didn't have enough water to navigate the
16 Pearl. We took a paddle and we stuck it down
17 in the middle. It was two foot deep here at
18 Pearl River at Pearl River.

19 So if you have a ditch and the northern
20 miles of the ditch isn't draining properly,
21 you don't go up there and you dig that ditch
22 bigger. You go below where that problem is
23 and you clean out that ditch, and you're
24 going to realize that the ditch up here,
25 then, is going to flow better.

1 It's common sense. It doesn't take
2 millions of dollars worth of studies; it
3 doesn't need all these engineer reports. The
4 Pearl is nothing but a big ditch, and down
5 here, the big ditch is stopped up.

6 Unfortunately, y'all don't come down here
7 and clean it. The last time it was dredged
8 or even any of the debris picked up out of it
9 was in the '70s. If you look, we used to
10 have a West Middle, Peach Lake Cutoff. You
11 can look since Katrina and you can see where
12 runout streams off of the West Pearl is
13 completely silted in and doesn't flow
14 anymore, and that's why you have the
15 gentleman over here who says he's seeing
16 three foot more water, you know, in April,
17 May, and March -- whatever he was saying --
18 the water's sitting in Slidell. That's why,
19 because the Pearl is a mess down here.

20 So I just think that it's kind of dumb,
21 and I want y'all to put your degrees aside
22 and look at the common sense logic. If you
23 don't clean this part of the ditch and expect
24 the whole thing to flow better. If you can
25 get down here and clean the ditch, then of

1 course, Jackson would flow better.

2 Last, my third thing is why are you going
3 to build a flood control structure when you
4 have the Ross Barnett Reservoir? The Ross
5 Barnett Reservoir was not built as a flood
6 control structure, and it is not operated as
7 one. So instead of building a flood control
8 structure right by something that could
9 operate as a flood control structure, why
10 don't you do a study on that to see how that
11 could benefit the people of Jackson? Thank
12 you.

13 MS. COLOSIMO:

14 Thank you, ma'am, for comments. I'm
15 an engineer, but a common sense,
16 practical person at the end of the day,
17 so I completely appreciate what you said,
18 so I'm going to let folks here talk to
19 the idea of the work downstream and
20 whether we can do that. It's all for us,
21 but there's a couple of things to really
22 hit first and foremost.

23 We are not biased towards a solution.
24 I want to be very clear about that. My
25 boss said that, I'm going to say it until

1 the end of time: my job is to get him
2 information to make a decision from. So
3 the input you have there, I want to know
4 more about it, I want to see it in
5 writing so we can unpack that and make
6 sure we address it in the report.

7 Two: it always comes back to
8 Congressional authority, or the authority
9 who has the infrastructure; right? So
10 I'm going to let these folks talk about
11 that lower reach that you're talking
12 about and being able to consider that in
13 tandem. That does fall within this
14 authority. This idea of combinations
15 thereof is a question of whether the
16 geography of our authority via Congress
17 gives us that opportunity; if not, how
18 can we support that in some other way?
19 There's always something there.

20 And then lastly, just this idea of
21 the maintenance and new infrastructure.
22 This is a problem nationwide in every
23 aspect of government, and it is an issue
24 that's been playing for over a hundred
25 years of increasing issues, and I

1 completely appreciate what you said
2 there, so thank you for that.

3 COLONEL KLEIN:

4 Do you have any comments?

5 MS. PROCHASKA:

6 I can go when you're done.

7 COLONEL KLEIN:

8 Okay, good. Ma'am, thank you for
9 that. I think you're going to be my
10 greatest advocate on the Hill, so if you
11 could -- and I'm serious, because I'm
12 seeing this, too. For me to own and
13 maintain the Pearl River Watershed and
14 not get the funding to maintain it, you
15 know, it's not good for me, too.

16 I will express the capability if you
17 get your congresspeople to ask me what
18 it's going to take to fix it. I'll tell
19 them. That's it -- that's how it goes.
20 That's how it works; okay? So
21 Representative Ezell, Representative
22 Scalise -- if they make the Lower Pearl
23 locks and weirs and issue, then that is
24 absolutely something I will express
25 capability to take on.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 4:

2 So the lock on the canal -- I guess a
3 lot of people -- I guess you don't know
4 that either. Right now, St. Tammany
5 Parish and Washington Parish have just
6 funded to do a study because y'all,
7 through the WRDA Bill of 2018, y'all were
8 able to sell it or transfer it to other
9 people.

10 So it's now on St. Tammany Parish and
11 different ones, so they're fixing to get
12 rid of all the lock gates and there's
13 spending \$660,000 to figure out what to
14 do with it because, ultimately, the Corps
15 of Engineers built it and then you
16 wouldn't take care of it.

17 WADE MIZELL:

18 They had locks collapse.

19 COLONEL KLEIN:

20 They did?

21 WADE MIZELL:

22 Yes, sir, and they would open the
23 locks to alleviate -- adjust them. They
24 had three locks and they had three lock
25 collapses, and the Corps de-funded it.

1 Y'all don't accept responsibility because
2 there's ongoing lawsuits -- people
3 drowning and whatnot. That can be
4 defended real easy, people drowning on
5 the sill. But anyway, y'all removed the
6 lock masters and now the locks are just
7 barely cracked up, with just a small
8 water flow going through. They could
9 adjust it to go out through Bogue Chitto
10 Refuge. The Bogue Chitto runs into it.

11 You've got two rivers, Pearl River
12 and Bogue Chitto, and the locks -- Lock 3
13 runs into Bogue Chitto, which also is
14 silted in like she's talking about and
15 needs dredging. But anyway, they turned
16 it over to Washington Parish and St.
17 Tammany Parish for the maintenance of it,
18 and of course, Washington Parish is
19 broke. They don't have any money for it.
20 St. Tammany, like she said, is funding a
21 study for the removal. I don't know --
22 that's about it.

23 **JOHN CANENBERG:**

24 I would like to put a more positive spin
25 on my first set of questions. The reason I

1 asked them is it may be an unintended
2 consequence, and it's certainly not something
3 you control at this point, but when you build
4 these lakes, developers swoop in. The people
5 that are displaced are displaced.

6 Since you mentioned our congressmen and
7 senators and so forth, as part of this
8 National Economic Development Plan, could it
9 not be a funding source for the Corps to have
10 some way to claw back the incredible rise in
11 lakeshore property that will happen in
12 Jackson? It's going to happen. People are
13 already planning and talking about it. Can't
14 you get some of that rise in value back into
15 your budget from these developers? That
16 would take legislation, that would take
17 political will. Would you back that?

18 MS. COLOSIMO:

19 So officially, we can't state we
20 would back it, but this is what I would
21 say: my boss would say that this issue
22 is -- just for full disclosure, as an
23 agency, as an example, any Corps of
24 Engineers owned facility where it happens
25 to have recreational lands, we charge

1 fees for those and they're pretty
2 nominal, but those monies go back to the
3 general treasury.

4 Department of Interior, every other
5 agency, it actually gets, essentially,
6 ring fenced and goes back to offset their
7 cost. That has been an area of perpetual
8 interest in every secretary I have worked
9 for with Congress, and it has never been
10 able to get across the finish line.

11 There is some act -- bill being
12 passed now. I don't recollect what it's
13 called -- I can let you know about that
14 -- that's basically the idea you're
15 talking about. This is a really tough
16 one. We can't officially support or not
17 support things, but we can say we value
18 in what you're talking about.

19 JOHN CANENBERG:

20 What's the schedule for this thing?

21 MS. COLOSIMO:

22 This thing? In terms of the report,
23 the draft report will come out in
24 September, so this is why we wanted to
25 get this process going now. We have

1 technical work underway, and so we want
2 to make sure we have good ideas. And
3 thank you for that question, because I
4 did want to come back to some of these
5 options people are talking about.

6 Remember, we talk about the
7 combination thereof, so some of these
8 other ideas, we want to make sure we're
9 recording both for what they are and what
10 we heard, and also seeing if there's a
11 combination thereof plan that exists that
12 we can put forward through the
13 Secretary's consideration. Again, we're
14 not biased to any one plan.

15 I guess and then the other thing I
16 would offer is that in my own experience
17 over decades of doing this as well is
18 that, you know, this whole idea of this
19 "what a community does with their land
20 with these investments and how they think
21 about the community" and stuff like this
22 is usually important; right?

23 What's the community benefitting from
24 now in terms of minimizing those damages,
25 and what's the opportunity therein? Some

1 communities do things around recreation
2 lands and public access and those kind of
3 things that I've heard great things about
4 over time, that are always benefits;
5 right? So I think we want to hear what
6 your good ideas are so we can capture
7 them in this analysis.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 5:

9 This is kind of sidetracking what
10 y'all's study is. I just have a question
11 --

12 MS. COLOSIMO:

13 Sure.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 5:

15 -- off the side of this. How does
16 the state of Mississippi allow Jackson
17 and Hattiesburg to dump millions of
18 gallons of untreated crossover into the
19 Pearl River?

20 COLONEL KLEIN:

21 Do you want me to take that question
22 for the Record, sir?

23 MS. COLOSIMO:

24 Thank you.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 5:

1 Well, it's ongoing.

2 MS. COLOSIMO:

3 Thank you.

4 TOM SHAW:

5 Sir?

6 HOWARD PAGE:

7 Yes. My name is Howard Page and I'm from
8 Gulfport, Mississippi, but I have a lot of
9 family that lives on the Pearl River here in
10 St. Tammany, and I'd like to follow up on an
11 issue that the lady before me just grazed
12 about sedimentation and silting on the river,
13 and how that's been a chronic problem for the
14 last few years.

15 There's a lot of places on the river
16 which may be outside of the study area. I
17 don't know if y'all've looked outside of the
18 40 miles that you're presently looking at,
19 and if you can, come down here and look, you
20 know, much further down river, and look at
21 the affects here, if it's possible to expand
22 your study area, and to do it before
23 September, when your report is actually going
24 to come out.

25 But my question is are you aware that the

1 silting has been going on, that it's been a
2 chronic condition; and are you aware that
3 it's continuing? In other words, when you
4 finish your study and put a ribbon it, as you
5 said, the silting is going to continue. So
6 whatever set of conditions you end up with,
7 you have to understand that you're not
8 addressing the sanding, gravel lining, and
9 the stream shore destabilization that's
10 happening that's constantly causing really
11 bad silting down here.

12 Is your study looking at that? Are you
13 aware that there's been a real increase in
14 silting down here, and that's there's going
15 to continue to me, and does your study take
16 that into account? And then also, are you
17 planning on expanding this area down here in
18 St. Tammany and Hancock County to include
19 your study area before your publishing in
20 September?

21 MS. PROCHASKA:

22 As far as the study area, downstream
23 impacts are going to be assessed. In
24 regards to sedimentation, we do have the
25 potential to do a sediment transportation

1 leveling or assessment, so please provide
2 that feedback in comment because that is
3 a potential. I'm not a hundred percent
4 sure if we were including that, but if we
5 could get the feedback, then we'll
6 definitely take it in advisement for
7 suggestion.

8 As far as looking into the level of
9 detail in the Pearl River down here, for
10 any impacts that we cause from or with
11 project condition, yes, that's going to
12 be assessed. But as far as what's
13 already here and in place, I'm going to
14 refer you to the St. Tammany study
15 because some of this stuff that would be
16 things that are ongoing here, the St.
17 Tammany study that the Corps is currently
18 doing and is going to be released, that
19 one's focused and includes the Pearl
20 River.

21 Yeah, we can connect you. It's
22 actually -- there is -- the public
23 website for the New Orleans District for
24 the Corps of Engineers does have listed
25 on there the St. Tammany study with a

1 fact sheet information for the public.
2 Before we leave here today, can we get
3 them the information on the website? Can
4 we share that in the background,
5 potentially?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 6:

7 The silting on the river, it's a
8 major problem. Our locks register the
9 sediment at 17 or 18. For three straight
10 weeks, they were talking about dredging
11 the bayous, marshes, and the extended
12 arm.

13 And I read that they were doing swamp
14 tours, and right behind the project, they
15 had in less than two months -- less than
16 60 days -- the bayou was filled back in
17 with silt, and that's a fact. It was
18 scary. Within two months. I ran that
19 river every single day, seven days a
20 week, 365 days a year, honest to God.
21 Every single day, every stops, there were
22 swamp tours, and in two months, the river
23 filled back in and that's the God's
24 truth.

25 HOWARD PAGE:

1 And to be clear, it sounds like that
2 hasn't been part of the study,
3 understanding that the silting, as far as
4 this particular study; that as you look
5 at down river effects, I don't think
6 you've understood the condition that
7 there's been a huge increase in silting
8 and a continuing silting problem here.
9 That doesn't seem to be a condition that
10 you're aware of.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 We're working on understanding the
13 conditions right now as part of our
14 assessment, so -- but your feedback is
15 going to make us -- you know, if you give
16 us a written comment and so forth, it'll
17 be something that we will put as part of
18 the public comment record and look into.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 7:

20 I just don't understand why you need to
21 take a study and don't intend for the study
22 to go on down to the Gulf of Mexico. That
23 would be just physical, all the way from the
24 start to finish.

25 MS. COLOSIMO:

1 Yeah. So the Corps of Engineers is
2 perhaps the most misunderstood and
3 different agency from any other federal
4 agency, and the main issue is that we
5 don't have germane authority and
6 appropriation to do what we see fit in
7 terms of the management of any region in
8 the country, largely speaking.

9 And what that means is we have to
10 have existing authorization to do
11 something in a geography, and it's
12 usually a specific geography, and
13 associated appropriation to do that. So
14 we have this segregated problem, but it
15 starts with your point. We don't have,
16 necessarily, the ability to expand the
17 existing Congressional declaration to do
18 an analysis beyond the geography that's
19 identified.

20 I think that's one of the reasons we
21 got the 1176 Direction, to make sure we
22 were doing downstream impacts. But the
23 flood risk management problem being
24 studied was really localized in the
25 Pearl, in some sense, compared to what

1 we're talking about here. Now, that
2 doesn't mean that it isn't encompassed in
3 this other analysis that I'm unfamiliar
4 with, so we're going to do our homework
5 on that. We just don't have that
6 authority.

7 TOM SHAW:

8 Folks, I would just ask if you've got
9 a question, the people that are online
10 would like to hear as well, and they are
11 trying to record this. If you would,
12 please, use a mic. Sir, I believe I have
13 a little bit of knowledge on the
14 navigation thing.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

16 Okay. So I just have one question. You
17 keep saying that there's a study going on for
18 the Lower Pearl done by the New Orleans
19 District. Why are they doing a study on the
20 Pearl if the Pearl is in the Vicksburg
21 District?

22 MS. PROCHASKA:

23 The Pearl River terminates in --
24 sorry. Go ahead.

25 COLONEL KLEIN:

1 So it's because -- it's mostly
2 because the -- we've regionalized our
3 study planners and they all operate out
4 of the New Orleans District. So by
5 matter of proximity, from here to New
6 Orleans District is about an hour and a
7 half drive; from the city of Jackson,
8 it's about an hour drive; from Vicksburg
9 --

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

11 I understand that, but that doesn't
12 -- if you have the authority over the
13 Pearl, why would you give the funding and
14 give the study to another district?

15 COLONEL KLEIN:

16 So because --

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

18 I think -- and I guess -- and you
19 don't even have to answer because I know
20 your answers are vague, but the problem
21 with the Pearl is, from day one, that the
22 right hand doesn't know what the left
23 hand's doing, and I think that having the
24 New Orleans District do a study on the
25 Pearl isn't helping the real problem when

1 the Vicksburg District is who is supposed
2 to be over the Pearl. Thank you.

3 COLONEL KLEIN:

4 Okay.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 9:

6 So let me tell you one quick thing with
7 respect to navigation. I mean, that's the
8 reason we have locks and dams on the Pearl
9 River, right, is that there was --
10 originally, it was constructed for
11 navigation. Back in the mid '70s, we dredged
12 for traffic -- it was predominantly barge
13 traffic, but other things, but we did do
14 dredging. It was maintained.

15 In the '70s, we were enjoying the EPA
16 doing all the dredging. We were not able to
17 continue that mission and guess what happens
18 when you've got the navigation mission and
19 the navigation traffic starts to fall off and
20 you start to build up sediment? Nothing goes
21 forward.

22 They physically couldn't move any more
23 barges, and so they were light loading the
24 barges, and then basically, it fell off. So
25 that's the reason that there's no more

1 navigation on the Pearl. Did that help a
2 little bit?

3 MS. COLOSIMO:

4 That lead to the disposition?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 9:

6 That did. It ultimately lead to the
7 disposition of the project, in terms of a
8 navigation project. That's what it was
9 originally prescribed for, so there is
10 no more maintenance dredging.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 Thank you.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 10:

14 You said there was no more
15 maintenance dredging?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 9:

17 Yes, sir. By the Corps of Engineers.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 10:

19 On Pearl River down through West
20 Pearl River, there's no dredging, but on
21 the East Pearl up through the Mississippi
22 Test Site, there is still dredging there.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 10:

24 But anyway, I have a question for you.
25 In 1983, Pearl River had gone up as high as

1 it's ever been in recorded history and they
2 had to open up the dam up against the Ross
3 Barnett, which flooding everything down here
4 -- everything got flooded. I'm just
5 wondering, I understand that there's been
6 some kind of limits put on what water levels
7 they can keep on the Ross Barnett -- that, I
8 don't know about, but that's what I've heard.
9 Can this project -- this One Lake Project tie
10 this whole thing in together and we can wind
11 up with another flood like that in '83?

12 MS. COLOSIMO:

13 Yeah. So appreciate you raising that
14 and writing it down for us, but generally
15 speaking, I mean, dams have -- I'm not
16 talking about Ross Barnett specifically.
17 Dams do have -- the way they operate by
18 authority or convention, this is a
19 private dam, so we don't have any
20 jurisdiction over that.

21 But how they operate under extreme
22 duress would lead to initial inquiries in
23 1983 under unprecedented conditions, but
24 our analysis will look at how that's
25 operated and look at any proposal for One

1 Lake and how it's operated, or proposal
2 for levees or anything else that comes
3 about through your suggestions and
4 recommendations that would alleviate
5 flood risk management. It will encompass
6 how Ross Barnett would operate.

7 TOM SHAW:

8 Any additional questions?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 11:

10 We have one more.

11 TOM SHAW:

12 Huh?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 11:

14 Her.

15 STACY ORTEGO:

16 Hi. Stacy Ortego. I'm with the
17 Louisiana Wildlife Federation, and we just
18 wanted to express some concerns that we'll
19 also submit in writing for the deadline. So
20 some of our concerns are really with wildlife
21 species. Some people also mentioned concerns
22 about oysters, shrimp, crab with the low
23 flow. There's -- they also mentioned in the
24 summer with the flow that's already lower,
25 there are folks that, you know, can't --

1 already are having trouble with those water
2 levels, and so there's concerns about that
3 being impacted even more.

4 And from what you're saying about the
5 sediment transport study, are you saying that
6 that has to be requested by people in writing
7 before you can actually do that? I'm not
8 sure why that wouldn't be part of the study
9 that you're submitting for comments later.

10 MS. COLOSIMO:

11 No. We just want your comments
12 documented about what you're asking for.
13 We are looking downstream at affects in
14 totality --

15 STACY ORTEGO:

16 Okay.

17 MS. COLOSIMO:

18 -- so I think that this is more just
19 another way for us to make sure we
20 capture it, and that's why we're doing
21 this.

22 STACY ORTEGO:

23 Understood, yeah. We'll make sure we
24 have that in writing as well. And
25 there's also some concerns with the toxic

1 waste sites that are in this project
2 area. If I'm not mistaken, I think
3 someone said there's about \$8 million set
4 aside to deal with any kind of clean up?

5 That doesn't seem very adequate, so I
6 would just make sure if that's -- if
7 that's the right amount or not, that you
8 make sure that if there would be negative
9 impacts at any -- that there's an
10 adequate amount of money to handle that.
11 With eight sites, \$8 million would not be
12 enough.

13 I would also point out that the
14 American Rivers has listed the Pearl
15 River as number three on their ten most
16 endangered rivers in the United States.
17 This is the second time since 2018 that
18 this has been put on their list, and that
19 is because of this project and the
20 potential negative impacts from it.

21 There's also concerns with the
22 sediment availability. Any wetlands that
23 we already have, we need to maintain, so
24 construction of any wetlands and bottom
25 land forest -- any cypress trees that

1 mature to growth, cypress trees that are
2 lost cannot be mitigated for. When
3 they're gone, they're gone. It will take
4 years and years to fix those impacts, and
5 then there's always the concern that
6 mitigation is not happening in the area
7 where the impacts are happening.

8 We've had those comments before on
9 projects with that issue. Sometimes
10 there's not even enough mitigation bank
11 credits in an area, so I would just
12 stress those concerns, and in addition,
13 wildlife impacts, too. There's two
14 endemic species of turtle: the ringed
15 sawback turtle and Pearl River map
16 turtle. There's also Gulf sturgeon,
17 which is a threatened species that we're
18 concerned about, and then you have
19 different bird species like black rail,
20 prothonotary warbler, and several other
21 species.

22 This river is one of the most
23 biodiverse in the nation, so we want to
24 make sure that the integrity of that is
25 intact. Again, we'll submit some of

1 those in writing, but thanks for meeting
2 with us here today.

3 MS. COLOSIMO:

4 Thank you.

5 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

6 Hello, all. My name is Juan Fernandez.
7 I am from Jackson, Mississippi, and I just
8 couldn't wait to be at this meeting, so I
9 came early here. I have three questions
10 slash points that I want to address, and I'm
11 going to try to stay with some of the things
12 that have been said here.

13 So number one, I think a big concern that
14 I've heard at least maybe two or three people
15 mention is the -- will there be development
16 along this lake? And I understand that it
17 seems that you can't give a yes or a no
18 because that's outside of the jurisdiction of
19 what the Corps does; however, I believe it's
20 either Appendix B or Appendix C of the 2018
21 EDIS does mention that one of the benefits
22 brought by this plan is increased land
23 values. I think one of the terms is
24 "intensification."

25 These are all land values that are in

1 Downtown Jackson, and I believe that they've
2 given us a minimum of about -- a conservative
3 estimate based on that of about \$55 million
4 over a certain amount of years. I don't know
5 if that relates to this idea that they are
6 going to develop along the lake. I doubt
7 that it's going to increase the value. I
8 don't know if that's something you can
9 comment on, so that's one statement right
10 there and I'll let you take it.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 I can comment. We've acknowledged
13 that that is in the Rankin-Hinds report.

14 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

15 Okay.

16 MS. COLOSIMO:

17 But I think in terms of whether we're
18 conspiring that or counting it as credit
19 is a whole different matter. So we think
20 many times -- and I've only seen this in
21 a couple of places here, so appreciate
22 this comment because, again, making sure
23 we get all of this information as we go
24 through the analysis that the Corps is
25 doing at its behest is this idea of

1 declining tax base, increasing tax base.
2 You know, it's the lack of investment
3 problems as well. So we are not
4 proponents in that one way or the other,
5 but we acknowledge it.

6 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

7 I hear you. I think another big
8 concern is the construction of a new dam
9 on the Pearl River, which is never called
10 a dam in the report, but it is, to my
11 understanding, is going to have to be
12 classified as a dam. So there's been a
13 big question -- when I talk to people in
14 Jackson, everyone has an idea of how a
15 dam is supposed to work, as an upstream
16 structure to capture excess water and
17 create storage capacity, and I believe
18 storage capacity was used here.

19 But just factually going back to what
20 these two comments from the U.S. -- the
21 USACE, in its technical review, comments
22 706- 6368, and comment 828-5727 -- they
23 both specifically state that this dam is
24 not going to create any storage capacity,
25 nor is it going to increase the

1 conveyance capacity of the river. So I
2 think there needs to be better education
3 on what the dam does serve.

4 What does it mean that a dam is going
5 to reduce maintenance cost over long
6 term, as it's going to keep the drainage
7 district from having to mow? I think
8 that that's like a really interesting
9 thing in flood control. I can't find any
10 cases on the -- you know, I'm just
11 searching the internet, but I can't find
12 any cases of a place using dams as a way
13 to maintain vegetation.

14 If it does turn out to be a good way
15 of maintaining vegetation, maybe
16 engineering or ERDC can adopt it, too.
17 So that's another thing I would like to
18 know, if you guys could be -- could help
19 us understand, really, what is the
20 purpose of the dam if it is not for
21 storage capacity.

22 MS. COLOSIMO:

23 So we'll do that as part of the
24 analysis, but specifically, I want to
25 reference that you're looking at review

1 comments that were open at different
2 points in time, and certainly, part of
3 our job here is to make sure the Corps
4 goes back and looks at those prior
5 comments and make sure we're encompassing
6 those good ideas and concerns; right?

7 And so, overarchingly, a lot of that
8 is the foundation on which Colonel Klein
9 discussed earlier. There's all this
10 information out there; we've got to make
11 sure we're responsive to all those
12 things.

13 **JUAN FERNANDEZ:**

14 And yes, you know, I wish I had more
15 updated information, but I'm only working
16 with what we have.

17 **MS. COLOSIMO:**

18 Sure, of course.

19 **JUAN FERNANDEZ:**

20 That being said, I think that there's
21 a lot of distrust here -- and I agree
22 with it -- so I'll just finish up with
23 yet another line from, as you said,
24 perhaps an outdated comment. Comment
25 706-0926 from the U.S. Army Corps of

1 **Engineers, the technical review in**
2 **reference to the 2018 DEIS: in general,**
3 **this report seems to be written to**
4 **justify the preferred alternative, i.e.**
5 **the One Lake, instead of objectively**
6 **assessing all the alternatives.**

7 **Perhaps it's -- we kind of feel it**
8 **too, and in Jackson, as well, understood**
9 **that this is really just a development**
10 **project, and I think that's a serious**
11 **reason of concern for us. Thank you.**

12 **COLONEL KLEIN:**

13 **Thank you, sir.**

14 **MS. COLOSIMO:**

15 **We've got time for some more**
16 **questions?**

17 **TOM SHAW:**

18 **Yes.**

19 **STACY ORTEGO:**

20 **I have one more.**

21 **MS. COLOSIMO:**

22 **Sure.**

23 **STACY ORTEGO:**

24 **Are y'all in conversation with the**
25 **municipalities and governments that have**

1 passed resolutions opposing the project to
2 take in those concerns? I know years back,
3 the Louisiana legislature opposed the
4 project. There's been Washington Parish,
5 others -- Washington, St. Tammany, I believe,
6 City of Slidell, Pearl River, Bogalusa --
7 several entities that have come out, and then
8 there's also some entities in Mississippi --
9 the Oyster Council, I believe.

10 So I'm just wondering if y'all are in
11 conversation with any of those folks, or just
12 taking those comments as well, because I
13 think that the governments that are dealing
14 with these potential impacts in their
15 communities downstream, it's really important
16 that you have conversations with them.

17 COLONEL KLEIN:

18 Yes, ma'am, we're taking those into
19 account. I recently got a letter from
20 the mayor of Monticello, too.

21 TOM SHAW:

22 We still have time, folks, if there's
23 something else on your mind.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

25 I think I want to follow up on what

1 she's saying. So in the past --

2 TOM SHAW:

3 Use the mic, please.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

5 So in the past, I don't think it was
6 y'all that held these meetings about, you
7 know, what we call the One Lake Project, but
8 in the past, the City of Pearl River, the
9 City of Slidell, different senators --
10 different ones -- wrote letters into public
11 comment periods opposing the thing.

12 So at this point, are y'all going to pick
13 those back up and add them to this, or do we
14 need to get those individuals, the cities and
15 entities, and politicians to redo that and to
16 submit them back into this?

17 COLONEL KLEIN:

18 So we're building on the previous
19 work, so that's all part of the
20 comprehensive record, and then in the
21 case of the mayor of Monticello -- new --
22 we got a new one, a new letter as well.

23 WADE MIZELL:

24 Yes. I've been living in Bogalusa for 65
25 years and been going down on the Pearl River,

1 started water-skiing at 6-years-old. There
2 used to be hundreds of people skiing on the
3 canal. Now, Washington Parish is basically
4 the only waterway where we have waterskiing,
5 whereas St. Tammany Parish, they have several
6 rivers: Tchefuncte River, Bogue Falaya River,
7 and so on and so forth.

8 So for us, that's our livelihood. Y'all
9 dry that up, we have nothing. We're just a
10 small town. We were the fifth largest city
11 in the state of Louisiana at one time, but
12 just like all small towns, we withered down
13 to nothing. But my concern is y'all drying
14 up the Pearl River and not being able to
15 navigate it. It would just be devastation,
16 as far as I'm concerned.

17 And you know, even though this isn't
18 y'all's study, majority of the people see it
19 as common sense that there's going to be
20 million dollar homes built on One Lake.
21 That's the way we see it.

22 MS. COLOSIMO:

23 Thank you.

24 JOHN CANENBERG:

25 Earlier, in the first response, it

1 alluded to the idea of the locally preferred
2 plan. Could you tell me what goes into the
3 locally preferred plan and whose voices were
4 heard in Jackson?

5 MS. COLOSIMO:

6 Okay, we're going to tag team here.
7 Okay. Big picture: National Economic
8 Development Plan, why does it exist? It
9 exists because it's the basis for cost
10 sharing. The locally preferred plan
11 could be any range of plans; it's just
12 not the National Economic Development
13 Plan. Why does that matter? It
14 expresses local interest of some subset
15 of locals. Sometimes there's more than
16 one locally preferred plan, but it really
17 gets at the basis for who pays the most,
18 in terms of cost sharing.

19 So there's certain laws about cost
20 sharing with any new plan, and any
21 increment above that, that increment cost
22 and whatever those features are, are 100
23 percent non-federal. So that's just
24 terminology, so I just want to clear up
25 our alphabet soup because it's very

1 confusing to most folks. So I will let
2 Colonel talk to you in the details, but
3 there could be many locally preferred
4 plans -- and so the non-federal
5 interests, Rankin-Hinds submitted one.
6 We know there are other interests by
7 other folks, so in theory, there could be
8 a multitude of variations out there.

9 COLONEL KLEIN:

10 And so with this one particular plan,
11 it did go through the review process. It
12 went through -- out to -- the local
13 entity held their own public sessions,
14 all right, and it went out. And to the
15 point, that was a big -- what I want to
16 highlight is the locally preferred plan
17 could be any locally preferred plan.

18 We've got three locally preferred
19 plans that we're assessing at this point,
20 so it's not just one singular one.
21 That's the nice thing about that Section
22 211 that was out in the Water Resource
23 Development Act of 1996. It allows any
24 local entity to submit their plan, as
25 long as its gone through the process, to

1 the Secretary for consideration.

2 Int his case, we've just received one
3 that we got that went through the process
4 so that it meets all the technically
5 feasible, environmentally less impact --
6 a host of things. It also assessed it
7 against the NED. I hope that satisfies
8 that area of concern.

9 TOM SHAW:

10 Anyone else? Okay. Outside, if you
11 didn't get a chance, stop by. You can
12 probably look a little closer at the
13 study area board. But I ask that if you
14 don't mind, put your push pin in with
15 respect to where you're from. There are
16 comment cards out there. You certainly
17 may go to the website or the email to
18 submit comments to us. Any last
19 thoughts? Otherwise, we're going to
20 adjourn.

21 COLONEL KLEIN:

22 I'll just state thank you, everybody,
23 for coming out and providing us with your
24 feedback. I've taken a lot of notes.
25 Thank you to our recorder for recording.

1 You're recording it as I'm saying it, so
2 -- okay, excellent. So you're thanking
3 yourself right now. So thank you, ma'am,
4 for capturing all of this for the public.
5 We're certainly going to go back and
6 study up. Ma'am?

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 Thank you, everybody. Your time's
9 valuable and we appreciate you spending
10 it with us today.

11 TOM SHAW:

12 Thank y'all. Be safe.

13 (THE PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:41 P.M.)

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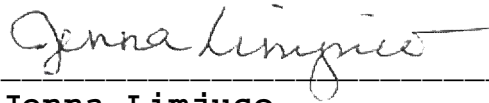
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14 Louisiana.

15
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17 Jenna Limjuco
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