

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

May 7, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-131 U. S. Capitol

Dear Senator Byrd:

I am deeply concerned that the plan for permanent pumping stations apparently proposed by the President as part of 100 year protection plan for the metropolitan New Orleans area would, if implemented, put the public's safety at grave risk and would also lead to a repeat of the property damage and other societal disruptions seen immediately after Katrina.

The plan associated with the cost estimate proposed by the President does not fully account for the operational challenges that arise during major storm events. After reviewing the report furnished in response to Section 4303 of Public Law 110-28, it is apparent that Option 1, as presented therein and on which the President's request is based, presents unacceptable risks given that it would retain the main line of protection deep in the heart of the populated area, would require reestablishing lines of levee and floodwall protection in very congested areas with poor foundation conditions and a history of failure, and would require very precise intergovernmental communications and operations during the stresses of a storm event.

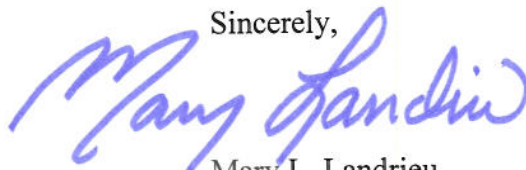
In the report the Corps states that "Option 2 is generally more technically advantageous and may be more effective operationally over Option 1 because it would have greater reliability and further reduces the risk of flooding." The Corps further states that "Discharge of storm water directly to the Mississippi River (Option 2a) would reduce the size of the new pump station required at the lake and would reduce the magnitude of the canal modifications required to accommodate gravity flow in the 17th Street system."

Given these conclusions and the severe consequences of a failure, I ask that you include directions to the Corps of Engineers in the Emergency Supplemental funding bill now being developed to adopt Options 2 and 2a as the approved plan for protection of the area and to develop and furnish to the Congress a reliable cost estimate for implementing Options 2 and 2a within 60 days of enactment of the bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator