

Councilmember-at-Large Clarkson  
Returns from Trip to Netherlands  
To Study Advanced System of Flood Control

News Release

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Contact:  
Jacquelyn Cole  
Office of  
Councilmember-at-Large  
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson  
Ph: 504-658-1072  
Cell: 504-577-3600  
[jcole@cityofno.com](mailto:jcole@cityofno.com)

New Orleans  
City Council

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New Orleans, LA - June 2, 2009 - Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson returned this weekend from a fact-finding trip to the Netherlands' hosted by U. S. Sen. Mary Landrieu and the Dutch Embassy to investigate the country's advanced system of flood control.

"When it comes to flood control, we have a lot to learn from the Dutch," Clarkson said. "The Dutch don't run from water. They manage it. If we want sustainable, long-term storm protection, we need to change our

way of thinking and adopt that philosophy."

More than half of the Netherlands lies below sea level, including two of the country's major cities, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. After experiencing a flood in 1953 that killed more than 2,000 people, the Netherlands overhauled its system of seawalls and dykes, creating a national department focused solely on water management, forming local water boards devoted to flood control, constructing elaborate systems of canals, and focusing on coastal barriers.

Along with a delegation of key elected officials, community leaders, scientists, and engineers, Councilmember Clarkson observed the ins and outs of this elaborate system through on-the-ground field outings during the six day trip, May 25 - 31.

Clarkson, who is a strong advocate for the restoration of coastal wetlands using large-scale freshwater diversions and other techniques, emphasized the need for a federal, state, and local focus on sustainable, natural storm defenses in addition to man-made levees.

"I am pleased with the meetings we had in the Netherlands," Clarkson said. "There is a real commitment on the federal and state level to pursuing the kind of lasting flood control that will make our region a viable place to live for our children and children's children."

She continued "We need to rethink how we protect ourselves - starting with prioritizing our own natural defenses in coastal barriers. If the Netherlands can stop the North Sea, we can stop the Gulf."

Members of the delegation to the Netherlands included:

- U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson
- Councilmember-at-Large Clarkson
- Netherlands Honorary Consul General Connie Willems
- Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority, the LSU Hurricane Center, Levees.org, Louisiana Speaks, the American Planning Association, and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

## **New Orleans City Council**

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; Council Vice President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.