

Council President Clarkson To Introduce Resolution Urging Corps of Engineers to Reconsider Decision on New Orleans' Outfall Canals at Tomorrow's Council Meeting

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Contact:

Jacquelyn Cole

Office of

Councilmember-at-Large
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson

Ph: 504-658-1072

Cell: 504-577-3600

jicole@cityofno.com

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New Orleans, LA - April 1, 2009 - City Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson will introduce a resolution at tomorrow's Council Meeting that calls upon the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to submit its plans and cost estimates for the redesign of New Orleans' outfall canals to independent, third-party review.

The resolution also supports a congressional field hearing in New Orleans by the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to further investigate the Corps' proposed redesign.

"My intent is for the Council to become another voice urging the Corps to take a step back from their current plan and reevaluate what is best for the long-term, sustainable storm protection New Orleans needs," Clarkson said. "I believe the Corps is mistakenly choosing a 'cheaper' plan that will actually put our area at greater risk for dramatic costs in life and property."

In redesigning the London Ave., Orleans Ave., and 17th St. canals, the Corps favors what is known as "Option 1." This plan would retain existing deficient canal walls, build new pumping stations at the mouth of each canal to handle storm surge from rising water, and rely on Sewerage and Water Board pumping stations at the opposite end of each canal to handle routine drainage. The Corps estimates this plan will cost \$800 million.

A proposed "Option 2," which the Corps has rejected as too costly, would involve the deepening and repaving of canal walls and the construction of new all-purpose pumping stations at each of these canals to handle both rising and falling water. The Corps estimates this plan will cost \$3.4 billion.

"I am concerned that Option 1 will provide insufficient protection if we have major rainfall accompanied by a significant rise in water levels within the canals, which we all know is common during major storms," Clarkson said.

The New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board, the Jefferson Parish Council, and the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority have each authored resolutions calling upon the Corps to submit their plans and cost estimates to independent, third-party review.

Present during Thursday's meeting to further explain the issue will be: Joe Becker, General Superintendent for the Sewerage and Water Board; Tom Capella, Jefferson Parish Councilman-at-Large; and David Wagner, architect with Wagner and Ball, a firm involved with post-Katrina city planning.

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 Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; 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.