



State of Louisiana
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

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Contact: Jenny Kurz
Outreach & Engagement Director
(o) 225-342-0168

**MAJOR STEP TAKEN TO BRING RESTORATION AND PROTECTION TO
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA COMMUNITIES**

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have now both agreed on a feasibility study that could mean billions of dollars for ecosystem restoration, hurricane protection and home elevations in Southwest Louisiana. The Corps' Civil Works Review Board approved the study in Washington, D.C. on Thursday after hearing from CPRA and other officials from the state. More action and review must be accomplished before it goes to Congress for potential funding, but the approval of the Review Board is a major step.

"This is a process that started in late 2005. After years of studying, we are finally at a point where we can move this critically important effort one step closer to a congressional authorization," said Johnny Bradberry, chairman of the CPRA Board. "Our sense of urgency to provide Southwest Louisiana with the protection and restoration measures it deserves is unwavering, and we remain committed to seeing this effort being congressionally authorized and ultimately fully funded."

Ecosystem projects, including marsh creation, chenier reforestation and shoreline protection, would help restore and protect nearly 15,000 acres of wetlands in the parishes of Vermilion, Cameron and Calcasieu. In addition to other risk reduction measures, approximately 4,000 homes and businesses could become eligible for a voluntary program to elevate structures above the flood level.

The concurrence on the feasibility study comes after years of work by the Corps of Engineers, CPRA, the Chenier Plain Authority, officials representing Calcasieu, Cameron and Vermilion Parishes and citizens of Southwest Louisiana.

The environmental impact component of the feasibility study will now undergo further state and agency review over the next month. Once finalized, the agreement goes back to the Corps of Engineers where a final report could be signed by the Chief of Engineers as early as July 25. The Chief's Report is the final project recommendation that is then submitted to Congress for funding consideration.

"It has been a long process to clear the hurdle we cleared today," said Chenier Plain Authority Executive Director Nedra Davis. "This has certainly been a cooperative effort, and I believe the nature of these meetings is a model of how government is supposed to work."

"Southwest Louisiana is a critically important part of our state," said Bradberry. "It deserves the same level of protection as other areas across coastal Louisiana. By continuing to work with the Corps and our local partners, we hope to bring long awaited hurricane protection and coastal restoration projects to the people who call Southwest Louisiana home."

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