Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

Addressing Misconceptions

Louisiana has lost nearly 2,000 square miles of land and we stand to lose double that over the next 50 years if we don't take bold action. We are in a race against time and numerous scientific studies have concluded the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion gives us the best chance to succeed. For the past several decades, these studies have been refined, and sediment diversions have always been an integral part of the State's Coastal Master Plan. This is our chance to move from planning to action, which is why it is important for the misconceptions to be addressed and the facts to be made clear.

False: *"Diversions are moving forward on the strength of marketing and spin, as opposed to science and concern for the coastal communities."*
True: This project must undergo an extensive federal permitting process that includes evaluating the potential environmental effects of the project and identifying means to address any negative environmental effects. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will use a science-based approach to examine potential effects on the resources, both human and natural, of the Barataria Basin. This includes: shrimp; crabs; oysters; protected resources (such as marine mammals and sea turtles); commercial and recreational fisheries, as well as navigation, flooding, water quality and cultural resources. Additionally, the socio-economic impacts that may result from the proposed project will also be addressed. The best science, computer modeling and expert guidance will be used to examine these effects and guide the design of the project. This project is also being considered for funding by the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (LA TIG). As part of this effort, the LA TIG issued a Strategic Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment #3 wherein they determined that large-scale sediment diversions can provide long-term ecosystem-level benefits and restoration of resources injured by the *DWH* oil spill As such, the LA TIG chose to advance the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion for further analysis, and the Phase II restoration plan will examine potential impacts to public health and safety, physical, biological, and socioeconomic resources in the Barataria Basin. That Plan will evaluate, among other things, the degree to which the Project may create or avoid collateral injuries to other natural resources in Barataria Basin while seeking to partially restore the injuries caused by the *DWH* oil spill.

False: "The largest fishing organization in the state was never even contacted by CPRA"
True: Community engagement is a top priority for CPRA and has been throughout this project. That includes meeting with the Oyster Task Force, Shrimp Task Force and holding monthly outreach events called Coastal Connections at bait shops and other locations convenient to fishermen. Additionally, CPRA, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Louisiana Sea Grant are receiving input from leaders with the seafood industry about potential impacts from sediment diversions and discuss potential adaption strategies as a result of this project and the rapidly changing coastal landscape. LDWF regularly provides long-term fisheries data sets, including those produced from industry harvests, to be included in modelling efforts. In addition, LDWF and fishing industry representatives serve as vital and trusted advisors to the operations of existing freshwater diversion projects. Such guidance assists in directing diversion operations that consider important fisheries needs such as brown shrimp growth and oyster reproduction. It is anticipated that LDWF and fishing industry representatives will continue to be a critical partner in coastal restoration efforts.

False: *"This project is being fast-tracked allowing CPRA to skip steps in the process"*
True: Recent advancements of the project in no way eliminate steps or jeopardize the integrity of the permitting process. The project will not receive a permit until these environmental review processes are complete in accordance with federal law.

False: *"The river has pollutants that will negatively impact our wetlands"*
True: Like other water quality issues, this will also be addressed within the EIS process. However, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, using guidelines by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), designates this stretch of the Mississippi River safe for both primary and secondary contact (swimming and boating) as well as for fishing and use as drinking water supply. We have also seen healthy marsh growth around other Mississippi River reintroduction areas along the coast.

False*: "CPRA is ignoring dredging and only focusing on diversions"*
True: In addition to sediment diversions, CPRA is fully committed to dredging. Over the next 15 years, CPRA plans to dredge as much as 200 million cubic yards at nearly $2 billion dollars. While dredging provides critically needed short-term benefits, it doesn't address any of the causes of land loss in the first place (like sediment starvation) and therefore cannot provide the level of sustainability that a sediment diversion can supply. In fact, our latest research shows that when implemented concurrently, marsh creation and sediment diversion projects each perform better and longer. Therefore, CPRA will strategically place some of these dredging projects near the sediment diversions to capitalize on this synergistic relationship.

False: *"The construction of this project will permanently damage parish infrastructure and roads"*
True: As part of this project, various utilities, including La. 23, will require relocation. These relocations are accounted for in the project's budget and will be led by the contractor with minimal disruption to residents. Throughout this construction, the 4-lane evacuation route must be maintained at all times.

False: *"This project will be operated year-round with no concern for the parish or residents"*
True: Residents are of utmost concern and there will be extensive monitoring of both the River and the Basin to determine whether any changes are necessary in the operation of the project. It will not be operated during tropical storms, hurricanes or during other threatening conditions. The project will operate when the Mississippi River is flowing above 450,000 cfs. and will have an Adaptive Management Plan that ensures the project maximizes sediment transport from the Mississippi River to the basins to build, sustain, and maintain land. The plan will help to accommodate uncertainty and allow the project to adjust for the ever-changing environment to ensure the project meet its intended goals.