Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 2, 2018
Contact: Chuck Perrodin
(o) 225-342-7615

Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Anticipated Permit Decision Moved up to November 2020

Baton Rouge, LA - Today the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District announced that it has updated the environmental and regulatory coordinated project plan (CPP) for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion. In accordance with Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, the CPP includes a comprehensive schedule for completing all environmental reviews and authorization decisions needed for the Diversion. The updated CPP advances the anticipated permit decision date from October 2022 to November 2020, expediting the permit timeline by almost two years. The revised permitting timetable is now available on the federal Permitting Dashboard at https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-projects/mid-barataria-sediment-diversion.

This announcement follows the execution of a MOU between the State of Louisiana and multiple federal agencies on January 26, 2018. That MOU, which established a more collaborative permitting process, included a commitment by all of the agencies to work to reduce the permitting timeline.

"Today's announcement reflects the continued collaboration between our State and the federal government and the commitment from all parties to implement this transformational project as safely and quickly as possible," said CPRA Board Chairman Johnny Bradberry. "I am pleased that our recent efforts to implement the new MOU has resulted in a new permitting timetable, and I anticipate further reductions in the schedule as we continue to coordinate and find efficiencies in this process. The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is critical to our future as it addresses the root cause of our coastal crisis by reconnecting the Mississippi River with our basins and restoring the natural process that built our delta."

"Over the last several months, our team has worked alongside USACE with the *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Trustees to carefully review the timeline and identify ways to expedite this process while complying with all federal, state, and local laws and ensuring a thorough environmental review," said Michael Ellis, CPRA Executive Director. "We greatly appreciate the partnership and tireless work of our Congressional leaders, the USACE, and other federal partners."

In compliance with FAST-41, USACE will continue to conduct quarterly reviews of the permitting timeline and make adjustments as new information becomes available.

The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will provide sediment, water, and nutrients to the basins in order to build, maintain, and sustain the wetlands, complementing the billions of dollars that have been or will be invested in coastal protection and restoration projects, such as marsh creation, ridge restoration, and barrier island restoration projects, along with shoreline and other structural protection projects. The structure will be located in Plaquemines Parish, LA, along the west bank of the Mississippi River, just north of Ironton and south of the Phillips 66 Alliance Refinery, near Mississippi River Mile 61.

Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan identifies sediment diversions as necessary projects to create a more sustainable coastal Louisiana landscape. The Barataria and Breton Basins are two areas that have experienced significant land loss due to sediment deprivation, hydrologic alteration, subsidence, sea level rise, and salt water intrusion. Since the Mississippi River was leveed in the 1930s, the Barataria and Breton Basins and Mississippi River Delta have lost approximately 700 square miles (or 447,000 acres) of land, representing one of the highest land loss rates in the world.

Louisiana's continued land loss largely impacts our citizens, economy, commerce, infrastructure, and culture. Furthermore, the collapse of coastal Louisiana would negatively impact the entire country: Louisiana's coast provides protection for infrastructure that supplies 90% of the nation's outer continental oil and gas, 20% of the nation's annual waterborne commerce, 26% (by weight) of the continental U.S. commercial fisheries landings, and winter habitat for five million migratory waterfowl. Sediment diversions will boost the local economy creating jobs for Louisiana citizens, reduce risk from hurricane storm surge, and preserve Louisiana's infrastructure and culture.

To learn more, visit the program's webpage: Mississippi River Mid-Basin Sediment Diversion Program.

###

Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is the single state entity with authority to develop, articulate, implement, and enforce a comprehensive coastal protection and restoration Master Plan *of unified vision to reduce hurricane storm surge flood impact, to restore our bountiful natural resources, to build land to protect our nation's critical energy infrastructure, and to secure Louisiana's coast now and for future generations.*