



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 28, 2019

Contact: coastal@la.gov

CPRA, LDEQ, and Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District Sign Innovative Agreement for Critical Pump Station



BATON ROUGE, LA. – A Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) signed today will fund a \$65 million pump station at the head of Bayou Lafourche in Ascension Parish. The pump station will help to combat saltwater intrusion along our coast and provide fresh drinking water to over 300,000 residents in Assumption, Ascension, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes. The agreement will also allow construction to begin this year on an \$18.5 million floodgate at Grand Bayou in the Morganza to the Gulf Levee System.

The CEA was signed by the [Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority](http://www.cp-ra.org) (CPRA), the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), and the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District.

“To meet the great needs we have in coastal Louisiana, we have to think strategically and take advantage of every funding opportunity available in order to move projects from the drawing board to construction,” said Chip Kline, Chairman of the CPRA. “This agreement is certainly creative, and is the result of a great deal of cooperation and coordination.”

The Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District will borrow \$65 million from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund administered by the LDEQ to construct a pump station on the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville with a minimum pumping capacity of

1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). The new facility will be constructed beside the existing 500 cfs pump station which will remain in service, effectively tripling the capacity for fresh water entering the bayou.

CPRA is pledging \$50 million toward repayment of the loan, using a portion of future Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) revenues CPRA will receive from offshore federal oil and gas leases. The Freshwater District will repay the balance with revenues from an existing property tax.

Bayou Lafourche Fresh Water District Executive Director Ben Malbrough says the project will go out to bid for construction in the first quarter of 2020, and will take approximately two years to construct. He emphasized the additional pumping capacity will have far-reaching impacts for the entire bayou region and beyond.

“Not only does Bayou Lafourche serve as the only source of drinking water for the 300,000 plus residents living in communities along its 106-mile path to the Gulf of Mexico,” said Malbrough, “it is also the source of fresh water utilized by the service companies in Port Fourchon who transport it hundreds of miles offshore for the exploration and production of oil and gas in the deepwater Gulf, which provides close to 20% of the United States oil supply. In addition, this increased freshwater flow is critical in the long term fight against saltwater intrusion, which has proven to be one of the leading causes of land loss in the lower portions of Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes.”

“We consider this financial arrangement a true win-win,” said CPRA Executive Director Bren Haase. “Extending our commitment of GOMESA dollars over a 15-year period for this project gives us the flexibility to commit funding to another much-needed project in the near term. The \$18.5 million floodgate at Grand Bayou is a critical link within the Morganza to the Gulf System. Construction there will begin before year’s end.”

The barge-type floodgate will be located approximately three miles south of Highway 24, and a quarter-mile north of the Pointe-Aux-Chenes Wildlife Management Area. It will be 147 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 29 feet high. When closed and sunk, it will provide flood protection to an elevation of 15 feet. The receiving structure will contain batter piles and braced steel sheet pile floodwalls to an elevation of 18 feet, serving as additional flood protection tying into raised earthen levees.

LDEQ Secretary Chuck Brown was pleased to sign the loan agreement and hopes the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program will continue to be used in creative and original ways like the Mississippi River Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche Project. The pump work is categorized as a Section 320 CWSRF Program project.

“We spend a lot of time and effort in Louisiana trying to keep water from going where we don’t want it,” Brown said. “This project is designed to bring water where we do want it.”

###

Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is the single state entity with authority to develop, articulate, implement, and enforce a comprehensive coastal Master Plan of unified vision, to reduce tropical 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.