



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 9, 2020

Contact: coastal@la.gov

CPRA Announces Alternative Financing Plan for Houma Navigation Canal Project

BATON ROUGE, LA — Today, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) announced the Houma Navigation Canal (HNC) Lock Complex Project is advancing to construction using an alternative financing solution. CPRA is utilizing recent legislative authority via [Act 89](#) of the 2020 Regular Legislative Session, giving CPRA the authority to finance coastal restoration projects by entering into debt obligations within the regulatory and oversight process of the State Bond Commission set out in existing law.

The HNC Project is currently proposed to be funded with RESTORE Bucket 3, and CPRA is finalizing the grant process. The alternative financing plan is intended to provide gap financing during the HNC Phase 2 construction period and until CPRA receives the annual RESTORE Bucket 3 payments. CPRA anticipates starting the competitive process for securing capital market financing a few months prior to the bid of Phase 2.

“We are aggressively finding ways through funding and delivery methods to advance more projects to implementation as quickly as possible,” said CPRA Chairman Chip Kline. “HNC is a critically important hurricane protection and ecosystem restoration structure, and we are thrilled to have identified a way to expedite its construction. We are leaving no stone unturned in order to make our Coastal Master Plan a reality.”

CPRA’s traditional approach involved waiting until the entirety of allocated funds were available before moving projects to construction.

“As a result of this new legislation, we will be able to advance construction of this important project by about four years,” said CPRA Executive Director Bren Haase. “This is a truly integrated project in that it provides both ecosystem restoration and hurricane protection benefits for Louisiana’s coastal citizens.”

“This new legislation is going to be a game-changer for the agency,” said CPRA Chief Financial Officer Janice Lansing. “The citizens of this state have entrusted us to not only be good stewards of these funds, but to quickly and efficiently advance critical projects, and this new funding mechanism enables us to do just that. I commend the Louisiana Legislature and lead author Rep. Tanner Magee for passing this pivotal legislation.”

The HNC Lock Complex Project is contained in the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan and 2021 Annual Plan (Project TE-113) as a hydrologic restoration project and is needed to reduce saltwater intrusion and distribute fresh water within the Terrebonne Basin, an area which is experiencing one of the highest rates of land loss in coastal Louisiana.

This project will help limit the intrusion of salt water into freshwater marsh systems allowing for the maintenance of thousands of acres of wetlands which serve as critical wildlife habitat and nurseries for fisheries. HNC will also provide crucial flood protection by blocking storm surge as a key component of the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project.

“The saltwater intrusion and freshwater diversion aspects of the HNC Lock System are huge environmental wins for Terrebonne Parish that will forever positively impact the ecosystem,” said Terrebonne Parish President Gordy Dove. “This is also a major economic win in that it will improve the nonstop navigation of the marine industry which is the economic backbone of Terrebonne. This project will create jobs in the commercial and industrial industries which will be benefited by the diversity of our oilfield marine and inland towing businesses. Special thanks to Gov. John Bel Edwards, Chip Kline, and everyone involved.”

In 2013, the Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District (TLCD) constructed a \$50 million barge floodgate known as the HNC “Bubba Dove” Floodgate with combined state and local funds. The new lock project will incorporate the existing floodgate as part of the complex.

“The HNC Lock Complex is the main anchor and most important structure of the entire 98 mile Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Risk Reduction Project,” said Reggie Dupre, Executive Director of TLCD and former State Senator. “In addition to the environmental benefits of the lock complex, we will now be able to better provide mariners with safe harbor when we are facing tropical weather threats. Once again our state government is continuing to be a very good partner to the citizens of Terrebonne Parish in making us a much safer community.”

CPRA anticipates beginning Phase 1 in 2021, while Phase 2, the construction phase, is expected to begin in 2022. For more information, click [here](#).

###