

Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force

**Minutes of Meeting
2019-2020 Interim
August 15, 2019**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force, called the meeting to order at 10:43 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman
Representative Barbara Carpenter
Senator Bodi White, vice chairman

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Dale Erdey

NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick Landry for Christopher Knotts
Jerry Passman
Brandon Rogillio
J. R. Saucier
Paul Sawyer
Tom Stephens
Brenda Zeringue

NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mark Harrell
Jason Lanclos
Jerry Thibeau
Eddie Williams

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

House:

Ashleigh Clare-Kearney, attorney
Glenn Fleming, attorney
Angelique R. Mozee, committee secretary
Fay Talbot, sergeant at arms

Senate:

Tony Lumbard, sergeant at arms

III. OPENING REMARKS

Representative Hodges thanked the members and staff for their hard work and dedication to the task force. She also thanked Congressman Garret Graves, Paul Sawyer, the Congressional Delegation, and the President of the United States for monies that were sent for flood control measures.

Representative Hodges stated that in 2019 she introduced House Concurrent Resolution 90, which expanded the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force to include the Amite River Basin District. She wanted to broaden the scope of the task force to look at other projects.

Representative Hodges discussed the original projects that were designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) after the 1983 flood, which were the Darlington Reservoir, the Comite River Diversion Canal Project, East Baton Rouge Flood Control Project, Amite River Ecosystem Project and Bayou Manchac. She stated that those projects had been completed, and the task force would not be discussing it today. Representative Hodges also reminded the task force that today, August 15, 2019, is the third anniversary of the 2016 Flood.

IV. DISCUSSION

Congressman Garret Graves' Office

Mr. Paul Sawyer discussed expanding the scope of the Comite River Diversion Task Force to the Amite River Basin. He stated that the original projects that were proposed from the 1986 Amite River and Tributaries Act, in which Congress directed the USACE to do a flood control plan for the Amite River Basin. He gave an overview of the five original projects, funding, and their current status. Mr. Sawyer addressed questions from Senator White and Representative Pope.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Transportation and Development

Mr. Bobby Duplantier, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 862-1037, spoke for information only. He gave an overview on the current status of the pipelines, utilities relocation, and the Kansas City Southern Railroad. He narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Comite River Diversion Project Status Update", Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. Nick Sims, USACE, 7400 Leak Avenue, New Orleans, LA, no zip code provided, (504) 862-2128, spoke for information only. He gave an overview on the status of the pipelines, utilities relocation, and the Kansas City Southern Railroad.

Representative Hodges, Mr. Duplantier, and Mr. Sims discussed letters dated August 2, 2019, that were sent to Representative Hodges, the USACE and the Amite River Basin Commission from the Kansas City Southern Railroad outlining their demands for Authorization for Entry into their

property. Representative Hodges read an excerpt from the letter into the records.

Mr. Duplantier and Mr. Sims explained the negotiation demands of Kansas City Southern Railroad. Mr. Duplantier stated that the USACE was in the process of drafting a response to the letters. They addressed questions from Senator White, Representative Carpenter, and Mr. Sawyer.

Ms. Christina Brignac, Department of Transportation and Development, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 348-3273, spoke for information only. She narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Comite River Diversion Project Status Update", Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Hodges asked Mr. Sims and Mr. Duplantier to discuss any published findings on the Darlington Reservoir.

Dewberry

Mr. Edward Knight, Department of Transportation and Development, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 379-3007, spoke for information only. He gave an overview on the Dewberry Model. He addressed a question from Senator White.

Amite River Basin Commission

Mr. Dietmar Rietschier, Amite River Basin Commission (ARBC), 3535 South Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Suite 135, Baton Rouge, LA 70815, (225) 296-4900, spoke for information only. He gave an overview on the operation maintenance of the Kansas City Southern Railroad.

Mr. Larry S. Bankston, ARBC, 8708 Jefferson Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 766-3800, spoke for information only. He gave an overview on the operation maintenance of the Kansas City Southern Railroad and addressed a question from Senator White.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Saucier discussed an alternate technology to address the Comite River Diversion Canal Project.

Mr. Derek Babcock, 13600 Quail Run Avenue, Denham Springs, LA 70726, (225) 505-9505, spoke for information only. He gave an overview of his experience during the 2016 Flood and the flooding risk in Livingston Parish.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENT

There were no announcements.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Valarie Hodges
Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force

Date approved: _____