

Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force

**Minutes of Meeting
2020-2021 Interim
November 18, 2020**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force, called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman
Senator Rogers J. Pope

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Robby Carter
Representative Buddy Mincey
Senator Bodi White, vice chairman
Senator Regina Barrow

NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Doug Carlson
Phillip Fetterman
Christopher Knotts
David Peterson
Brandon Rogillio
Paul Sawyer
Brenda Zeringue

NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Beaux Jones
Jerry Passman
Tom Stephens
Larry Thomas
Eddie Williams

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

LeeAnne Sharlow, House attorney
Angelique R. Mozee, House committee secretary
Danny Leming, House sergeant at arms
Faye Talbot, House sergeant at arms

Fate Mitchell, Senate sergeant at arms
Anthony Lumbard, Senate sergeant at arms

III. OPENING REMARKS

Representative Hodges gave an overview of the task force and the five projects that are included with the Comite River Diversion Canal Project.

IV. REQUEST FOR UPDATES

Congressional Updates

Mr. Paul Sawyer with Congressman Garret Graves' office thanked Representative Hodges for expanding the scope of the Comite River Diversion Canal Task Force to include the Amite River Basin. He stated that the task force will benefit from hearing updates from the Louisiana Watershed Initiatives that are being operated by the Office of Community Development Disaster Recovery, in conjunction with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, and the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD). He gave an overview of the importance of the Watershed Initiatives that oversees the \$1.2 billion federal flood monies that are being administered by the state.

Mr. Sawyer gave an overview and explained how the five projects: the Darlington Reservoir, the Comite River Diversion Canal, the East Baton Rouge Parish Flood Control, the Amite River Basin Ecosystem Restoration, and Bayou Manchac systems are designed to control water flow for future protection. He said until these projects are completed, the Amite River Basin remains the highest risk area in the state.

Mr. Sawyer also stated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is administering the \$1.4 billion for the Comite River Diversion Canal and the East Baton Rouge Parish Flood Control, which are two of the five original projects currently under construction.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Transportation and Development - Comite River Diversion Canal

Mr. Bobby Duplantier, USACE, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 862-1037, spoke for information only and narrated a portion of a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Amite River and Tributaries - Comite River Diversion Project". He provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records. He discussed the organizational chart for the USACE, Comite River Diversion Overview and Projects, and the Comite River Diversion USACE Recent Progress. He also narrated a video for Contracts 7-11 Clearing and Grubbing, and Highway 61 photos.

Ms. Christina Brignac, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 379-1394, spoke for information only and also narrated a portion of the PowerPoint presentation entitled "Amite River and Tributaries - Comite River Diversion Project". She discussed the organizational chart for the DOTD and their ongoing project tasks for 2020-2021.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Darlington

Ms. Kaitlyn Carriere, USACE, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 862-1798, spoke for information only and narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Amite River and Tributaries -

East of the Mississippi River, LA Feasibility Study" (a.k.a. the Darlington Dam Study). She provided a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Ms. Sarah Bradley, USACE, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 862-1723, spoke for information only.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. David Mitchell, The Advocate, no address provided, (225) 324-1877, spoke for information only. He inquired about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' plans to deal with sand and gravel operations, and mineral deposits.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairwoman Valarie Hodges
Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force

Date approved: _____