



VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY

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JAMES B. TUCK
PRESIDENT

CURTIS L. CLAY
VICE-PRESIDENT

RHONDA M. FLUMMER
SECRETARY / TREASURER

March 22, 2011

House Speaker Jim Tucker
900 North 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Honorable Tucker,

MEMBERS:

DISTRICT 1
JAMES B. TUCK

DISTRICT 2
HOWARD "PETE" DOWDEN

DISTRICT 3
TOMMY L. MCMAHON

DISTRICT 4
JACKIE L. GRIMES

DISTRICT 5
REGGIE JOHNSON

DISTRICT 6
JERRY BLAIR

DISTRICT 7
LEONARD JOHNSON

DISTRICT 8
MELVIN HAYMON

DISTRICT 9
SAM B. FULTON, JR.

DISTRICT 10
CURTIS L. CLAY

DISTRICT 11
JOSEPH "BO" CRYER

DISTRICT 12
KENNY HAYMON

3-24-2011
Statement of James B. Tuck
House of Reps/Vernon

The Vernon Parish Police Jury, would like to express opposition to the current plans to redistrict Vernon Parish. The current plans for Vernon Parish identified as working draft 1B for district 30 and working draft 1B for district 25 is not acceptable. We believe that this would not allow Vernon Parish to be properly represented as it further divides representation for Vernon Parish and places Leesville and part of Fort Polk in representation through Rapides Parish.

If the House Bill goes forward as it is, the Rapides Parish portion of the district would have 24,000 voters while the Vernon Parish portion would have only 21,000. In addition, of those 21,000, 10,000 are Fort Polk residents that do not vote locally. This leaves Vernon Parish at a considerable disadvantage. Vernon Parish needs strong representation for us to continue to serve Fort Polk and its mission.

The following list provides some detail as to what strong, local representation has done for Vernon Parish in its effort to support Fort Polk.

- Vernon Parish is the home of Fort Polk, the 3rd largest post (by land area) in the country and it is one of the only bases that can still expand because there is little to no encroachment. Fort Polk is trying to acquire another 100,000 acres of land in the Vernon Parish area to further their mission.
- Fort Polk has the second largest payroll in the State of Louisiana, second only to the State of Louisiana. And in 2009, Fort Polk had the largest economic impact in the state at \$1.67 billion.
- Louisiana Economic Development(LED) recognizes the economic impact of Fort Polk and that investment is needed in this area to serve the future expansion of Fort Polk. LED has recently funded a restaurant study for Vernon Parish as well as an economic impact study being prepared by Dr. Loren Scott.
- Fort Polk Progress – Mission to maintain Fort Polk's economic impact on the region as well as increase the viability of Fort Polk. It holds regular meetings with local, regional and Army officials. This group travels



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House of Reps/James Tuck

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annually to Washington DC to meet with the congressional delegation to present regional needs and seek support for project funding.

- Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment Grant – In 2010, OEA funded 90% of the salary on a one year contract for a Regional Growth Management Coordinator. The Mission was to address significant growth at Fort Polk and for the region to undertake growth management in partnership with the installation.
- Veterans Cemetery - The Department of the Veterans Affairs is constructing a Veterans Cemetery to be located on Hwy 467, near Fort Polk. The cemetery is planned to be 204 acres in size, with 27.6 acres ready for use over the next 10 years.
- VA Clinic – The Department of Veterans Affairs is establishing a VA Clinic to be located on Hwy 467, in close proximity to the Veterans Cemetery.
- The Office of Community Development (formerly the Louisiana Recovery Authority) authorized a planning grant for Vernon Parish which shows a state and federal focus on this area because of Fort Polk.
- \$100,000.00 received from federal appropriation for planning through the Center for Planning Excellence to help meet the need for planning in Vernon Parish because of Fort Polk.

DISTRICT 7
LEONARD JOHNSON

As you can see, Vernon Parish and Fort Polk are strong economic drivers in Louisiana and we hope that you will re-consider the current redistricting plans and look at some options that will put Vernon Parish on a more level playing field with its surrounding parishes.

DISTRICT 8
MELVIN HAYMON

DISTRICT 9
SAM B. FULTON, JR.

I respectfully request that you reconsider the current plans and refrain from further division of Vernon Parish state legislative representation.

DISTRICT 10
CURTIS L. CLAY

Sincerely,

DISTRICT 11
JOSEPH "BO" ORYER

James B. Tuck

James B. Tuck
President

DISTRICT 12
KENNY HAYMON