

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1806**

January 14, 2021

The Honorable R.D. James  
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works  
Department of the Army  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

The Honorable Russell T. Vought  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Assistant Secretary James and Director Vought:

In addition to designating a new start and funding to the Morganza to the Gulf project, I write to urge you to fund the following priorities in the Fiscal Year 2021 Civil Works Work Plan:

- **Section 213 of WRDA 2020, Lower Mississippi Comprehensive Management Study**
  - It's clear that existing systems of managing the river are unable to handle the watershed burden of 32 states and two Canadian provinces, resulting in repeat and record numbers of days spent at flood stage. The Corps needs to rethink their management plans for the lower portions of the river, assessing new and more efficient operations for existing structures and identifying new opportunities to build additional capacity upriver.
  - This comprehensive study was authorized at a level of \$25,000,000 in P.L. 116-260, legislation which also included appropriations report language supporting a comprehensive assessment to address these concerns.
- **Section 212 of WRDA 2020, Restoration in the Louisiana Coastal Area:**
  - WRDA 2007 authorized a number of initiatives to prevent future environmental degradation in the Louisiana Coastal Area. Unfortunately, few of these priorities have moved forward, and our coastline continues to degrade at a rapid pace.
  - Section 212 restarts these efforts by first requiring that the taskforce required by WRDA 2007 is assembled and submits the requisite annual report to Congress. This is a reasonable starting place for a critical environmental protection effort and should be completed *in addition to* any effort to integrate USACE programmatic framework with the State of Louisiana Coastal Master Plan.
- **Upper Barataria Basin:**
  - \$1 million to initiate Pre-Engineering and Design for the Upper Barataria Basin project.
- **Amite River and Bayou Manchac:**
  - \$2 million to ensure the Amite River and Bayou Manchac are dredged to authorized levels.
- **Atchafalaya River- Bayous Chene, Bouef, and Black**
  - \$85 million for critical dredging needs following record levels of shoaling.
  - The condition of these waterways has resulted in navigational hazards and significant flood impacts to the surrounding areas. These impacts will likely increase if shoaling is not addressed in a meaningful way as soon as is practicable.

- **Mississippi River (Baton Rouge to the Gulf) Navigational Projects:**
  - \$110 million for dredging needs, including annual maintenance and dredging to the project's authorized depth. We cannot rely on emergency and supplemental funding for predictable high-water events in an economically critical waterway.
  - The Corps must be required to utilize existing authorities under Section 1111 of WRDA 2018 and the Gulf Coast Regional Dredge Demonstration Program established by P.L. 116-94 to award longer-term dredge contracts for regions which demonstrate regular navigational hazards, particularly in the region south of Venice, LA.
- **Section 219, WRDA 1992 Environmental Infrastructure Projects in South Louisiana**
  - **Ascension Parish:** \$25 million for environmental infrastructure projects.
  - **East Baton Rouge Parish:** \$17 million for environmental infrastructure projects.
  - **Livingston Parish:** Continuation of existing environmental infrastructure projects.
- **Bayou Lafourche and Lafourche Jump Waterway**
  - \$12 million for dredging to restore channels at Port Fourchon following the 2020 Hurricane Season and to ensure channels meet authorized depth levels.
- **Houma Navigation Canal:**
  - \$10 million for dredging to restore the HNC following the 2020 Hurricane Season and to ensure the waterway meets authorized depth.
- **Section 204 (I), WRDA 2020 Grand Isle Storm Damage Reduction Project:**
  - Funding to analyze project modifications which better address erosion and hurricane protection concerns, including assessment of beach nourishment.
  - Hurricane Zeta resulted in tremendous damage to the dune, breakwater, and burrito levee components of the Grand Isle project. While emergency repair work is ongoing, this project requires additional funds to assess long-term solutions.
- **Atchafalaya Basin**
  - Operations and Maintenance funding to ensure habitat protection in the nation's largest river-basin swamp as well as adequate flood protection assets to support the needs of the MR&T project.
- **Mississippi Delta Region, Davis Pond and Caernarvon Diversions:**
  - Request full funding for annual operation and maintenance of these diversions in the amount of \$1.875 million.
  - These projects have resulted in tremendous benefits in areas which are under significant environmental strain but have received irregular funding.
- **Section 1102 of WRDA 2018, Study on the Future of the Corps of Engineers:**
  - Improvements to organizational efficiency should be strongly considered for the Civil Works Division. WRDA 2018 authorized a study to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences to identify opportunities to improve project delivery and organizational structure.
  - Language included in P.L. 116-260 appropriations report language made clear that while funds may not be used to *relocate* Civil Works from the Department of Defense, a study on the structure of the organization, including the Section 1102 study, is permissible.
- **Bank Degradation in Pineville, LA, resulting from dikes in Alexandria, LA:**
  - The dikes on the Alexandria, LA side of the Red River result in bank degradation on the opposing bank in Pineville, LA.
  - Fixes made by local leaders are not sustainable and a long-term solution has been identified by the Vicksburg District. This solution should be funded and implemented.

Thank you for your attention to these requests. Should you have additional questions, please contact Maggie Ayrea at [Maggie.Ayrea@mail.house.gov](mailto:Maggie.Ayrea@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Garret Graves", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Garret Graves  
Member of Congress