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April 26, 2007

Colonel Jeffrey A. Bedey
Commander
Hurricane Protection Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Bedey:

At a Jefferson Parish Council meeting last evening, a Corps of Engineers official indicated that no work would be done to fortify the 17th Street outfall canal floodwalls. I take serious offense at these comments.

The final version of the emergency supplemental conference report that will be signed by the President will retain my amendment (attached) that requires the Corps to perform a full evaluation on the floodwalls and required improvements. For a Corps official to already conclude the results of this evaluation is cause for deep concern and clearly not within the intent of my amendment.

I would also like to remind you that the floodwalls remain an integral part of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project. Congress has not taken steps to deauthorize these features, and therefore, they should perform to full design specifications. Any deficiencies in this protection infrastructure should be addressed immediately. The current safe water levels on the three outfall canals impose strict operating restrictions on the "inland" pumping stations that feed the three outfall canals. In order for the system to operate effectively, the walls must be fortified.

Please review this situation and the attached amendment as soon as possible. Send me your revised action plan in accordance with the requirements of my amendment.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

DAVID VITTER
United States Senator

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