



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Engineering Firm Releases Cost Analysis of Outfall Canal Projects to Local and Statewide Government Group

In an effort to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to move toward a more prudent solution for drainage improvements for three outfall canals along Lake Pontchartrain, several governmental entities joined forces and retained the services of AECOM, an internationally renowned engineering firm. The sponsors include the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East, Jefferson Parish Department of Public Works and the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

AECOM performed a 60-day cost analysis for three improvement options presented by the Corps for the 17th Street, Orleans Avenue and London Avenue outfall canals. AECOM used more recently obtained information to develop cost estimates for the required work.

The sponsors as a group commented, "Our team of drainage experts agreed, that with such a crucial project for the metropolitan area, a second opinion on costs was essential."

Much of the storm water runoff from the City of New Orleans (Uptown New Orleans, Mid City) and portions of Jefferson Parish (known as Hoey's Basin) are pumped into the 17th Street Canal. The Orleans Avenue and London Avenue outfall canals (Gentilly, Lakefront and Lakeview) only drain runoff from Orleans Parish.

Levees and floodwalls were previously constructed on both sides of the outfall canals as features of the Lake Pontchartrain and the Vicinity Hurricane Protection System (HPS) Project.

During Hurricane Katrina, breaches in floodwalls along the 17th Street and London Avenue flooded much of the City.

Following Katrina, interim control structures and pump stations were installed by the Corps of Engineers near the mouths of the three outfall canals to prevent storm surge in Lake Pontchartrain from entering the canals. Still, a major concern of the group is that because levees have not been fully repaired, strengthened or reinforced it leaves the area still operating under safe water elevations. This situation may limit existing pump stations from operating at full capacity and may also create extreme vulnerability for this area.

To replace the interim control structures, Congress has authorized the design and construction of new permanent control structures and pump stations that will provide permanent storm surge protection from the lake. The Army Corps of Engineers has identified three options to address the floodwall failures and has performed cost analysis on the options:

Option 1 includes gate structures at the lakefront and pumping stations that would only be used during large surge events.

Option 2 includes the construction of drainage pumping stations along the lake at each of the three canals, the elimination of the existing levees along the canals and the decommissioning of the three internal pumping stations.

Option 2A is the same as Option 2 except it adds a pump to the river component that would be very beneficial to New Orleans and Jefferson Parish. This component will allow some of the water that normally flows to the 17th Street Canal to be diverted to the Mississippi River.

The Corps had earlier estimated that Option 1 would cost approximately \$800 million (AECOM estimates \$900 million), Option 2 will cost approximately \$3.4 billion (AECOM estimates \$2.2 billion) and Option 2A would cost an estimated \$3.6 billion to construct (AECOM estimates \$2.4 billion).

This represents a significant cost increase for Option 1 and reductions in the cost of Option 2 and 2A. It is the opinion of the local sponsors that this makes Option 2 and 2A the Corps best technological approach and a much more attractive approach than Option 1.

Based upon its own evaluations, the Corps has elected to move forward with the construction of the Option 1 gate stations rather than Options 2 and 2A, even though the Corps itself has indicated that Option 2 represents the most technologically superior option, according to group officials.

The group would like the Corps to consider this updated information and work towards the construction of Option 2 or 2A. AECOM was paid \$400,000.00 (split evenly among each sponsor) for the study. Copies of the Cost Analysis are available on the website of each governmental entity:

- Jefferson Parish.....www.jeffparish.net
- LCpra.....www.lacpra.org
- Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans.....www.swbnola.org
- Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East.....www.slfpa.com

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