ORAL TESTIMONY
BY
JOSEPH M. RAULT
PRESENTED TO THE

SENATE ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
JUNE 16, 2009

GOOD AFTERNOON: Madam, Chair, Distinguished Senators and Members of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee. We deeply appreciate the attention you and Congress have given the 17th Street Outfall Canal and further are delighted to be a part of this Hearing. It is well known that the breach in the 17th Street Canal wall during Katrina caused catastrophic flooding in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish causing the loss of many lives and hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to thousands of residences.

My name is Joseph M. Rault. I am a native of New Orleans and I am honored to be here representing Pump to the River Jefferson/Orleans, a community non-profit organization comprising 26 neighborhoods and over 100,000 citizens of Orleans (85,000) and Jefferson (15,000) Parishes. We are from all walks of life and live in what's called the Hoey's Basin in the heart of New Orleans and we are drained by the 17th Street Canal system.

I am a graduate of MIT and received a degree in Marine Transportation from its school of Naval Architecture and Marine

Engineering (1948). I attended Georgetown Law and graduated from Tulane School of Law LLB (1950) and am a member of the Louisiana State and Federal Bar Association. I have served in the U.S. Navy (1943 - 1946) where I became commander of the USS LCI 549 - at the atomic bomb test in Bikini. Currently I own and operate my own business, Rault Resources, Inc., in commercial office building development.

Over the past 3 years, I have attended and participated in many Corps meetings with stakeholder groups discussing various options for the 17th Street Canal. Most of these resulted in favoring Options 2 & 2a. I have also participated in the research of the Congressional legislation resulting in 2 acts requiring reports and cost estimates from the Corps.

My wife and I have lived in Jefferson Parish for some 30 years where we raised children and grandchildren in a happy environment. Those days are now gone. The flooding of our area was so rapid that many people were trapped in their homes and had to be rescued. The water was filthy and toxic from all of the garbage and dead animals that had drowned. We had 4 feet of water in our home that stayed 3 weeks. We lost our home as did thousands of others.

Today, homeowners are still fearful of another breach and flooding. They don't want to risk more money to rebuild, not to mention risk their own lives. This is exactly why the residents, the political powers and the congressional delegation are strongly

opposed to Option 1 which was so well covered by the previous witness, Mr. Tom Jackson. I agree with his entire testimony.

Homeowners decided to do something about it and search for a solution. The idea was initially found in the very record of the Corps of Engineers in an early engineering report entitled DMJM Harris dated August 18, 2006, just some months after Katrina, in which Pump to the River was recommended as a feasible option. This led to an intense research by the private consulting engineers authorized by the Parish of Jefferson to confirm that finding. The results were a positive approval reflected in six engineering reports.

The engineering reports substantiate that Pump to the River could take as much as 25% of the water out of the 17th Street Canal by pumping it in a new pipeline direct to the nearby Mississippi River, at a cost of only $205M! A cost effective solution.

The advantages of Pump to the River are as follows:

1) $205M – only 6% of the Corps' estimate of Option 2.

2) $205M – only 23% of the cost of all 3 Option 1 outfall pumping stations.

3) By reducing the water volume in the 17th Street Canal by 25%, this would significantly reduce the cost of sizing the canal which could be a major savings.

4) Similarly, this would reduce the cost of the Lake Pontchartrain pumping station due to the reduced volume and simplify construction of this station.

5) Of most importance is added SAFETY - the reduction of water flow in the canal would dramatically increase the margin of safety and security of the wall system - without which these could be a CATASTROPHIC CALAMTY if an excessive water flow pressured and breached the walls! It takes those last straws off the camels back.

6) And Pump to the River is an independent system not relying on either Option 1 or Option 2 and can be built and working in about 18 - 24 months! It simply adds value to the entire project.

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Thus it now seems that everyone is in favor of Option 2 and Pump to the River.

WHO IS FOR PUMP TO THE RIVER?

State of Louisiana
City of N.O.
City Council of N.O.
N.O. S&WB
New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors
Jefferson Parish
Jefferson Parish Council
President of Jefferson Parish
Regional Planning Commission
26 neighborhood groups from Orleans & Jefferson parishes
(representing 100,000 residents)
Jefferson Business Council
Jefferson Chamber

WHO IS AGAINST PUMP TO THE RIVER?

NOBODY!

N.B. Please note that even the Corps of Engineers acknowledges that Pump to the River is the best technical option! They simply say they do not have authority at this time for its funding.

The Corps in its last report to Congress acknowledged that Option 2 was far superior and safer:

> "Option 2 is generally more technically advantageous .... over Option 1 because it would give greater reliability and further reduces the risk of flooding." Report to Congress in response to Section 4303 of Public Law 110-28;

Just 3 weeks ago, the Corps of Engineers again openly acknowledged at its public environmental hearing on the 17th Street Canal before 400 attendees that both Option 2 and Option 2a as well as the Pump to the River component were far superior to Option 1. In the words of the Corps' chief operating officer, Mr. Chris Accardo, which rang in my ears and I now paraphrase:

> Yes, ***both PTR and Option 2 are technically far superior than Option 1 and we would like to use them, but they are not as yet authorized for funding by Congress.*** (paraphrased and verified by the Times Picayune article dated May 20 by Mark Schleifstein.)

MEMBERS OF THE PTR ORLEANS/JEFFERSON GROUP PRESENT TODAY WHO ALSO ATTENDED CAN VERIFY THESE STATEMENTS

Lisa Ludwig - Project Manager
John Baus - Task Force Member
Joe Sherman - Task Force Member

Shirley Laska - Professor of Sociology/Director/Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology/
University of New Orleans

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Pump to the River, agreed to by all stakeholders including the Corps, would add a safety element to the 17th Street Canal of immeasurable proportions, would give residents better hurricane protection, better drainage and less reliance on the walls of the canals. At $205M, it is a bargain and would save lives and save money by virtually eliminating the $4.3B flood insurance claims for Katrina alone and other remedial cost that ran into the billions. It would also provide safety to our huge Ochsner Hospital Medical Complex that is surrounded by this area, including emergency vehicle transportation.

Pump to the River is the right thing to do. Moreover, the peace of mind it provides would be priceless.

Thank you,

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