

**Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force**

**Minutes of Meeting  
2017 Interim  
November 6, 2017**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force, called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman  
Representative Rogers J. Pope  
Senator Regina Barrow  
Senator Dale Erdey  
Senator Bodi White, vice chairman

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative Barbara Carpenter

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mark Harrell  
Christopher Knotts  
Jerry Passman  
David Peterson on behalf of Jason Lanclos  
J. R. Saucier  
Paul Sawyer  
Tom Stephens  
Jerry Thibeau  
Brenda Zeringue

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Brandon Rogilio

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

House:

Ashleigh Clare-Kearney, attorney  
Glenn Fleming, attorney  
Angelique R. Mozee, committee secretary  
Danny Leming, sergeant at arms

Senate:

### **III. OPENING REMARKS**

Representative Hodges introduced and thanked the staff and task force members for their hard work and dedication. She gave the purpose and an overview of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force and the steps that are needed to complete the project.

### **IV. PRESENTATIONS AND BRIEFINGS**

#### **Governor's Office**

Ms. Erin Monroe Wesley, Governor's Office, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-0312, spoke for information only. Ms. Wesley presented the governor's perspective on his commitment and the advancement of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project. She discussed the preliminary analysis estimates, the state financial resources towards the project, and the dedication of monies to Priority I and V in the Capital Outlay bill.

Ms. Wesley stated that the governor and Secretary Shawn Wilson, Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), delivered the Louisiana letter of intent regarding the financing and the state's shares of responsibilities to General Todd Semonite with the Corps of Engineers in September, and he accepted the intent and renewed the Corps' commitment to deliver the entire project with a phase approval targeting functional elements.

Ms. Wesley stated that the Governor's Office of Homeland Security will continue to meet with parish leaders to discuss the potential use of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program dollars to construct the future programs of the project. She proceeded to address questions from the task force members.

Mr. Casey Tingle, Governor's Office of Homeland Security, 7667 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 485-745, spoke for information only. He addressed questions from the task force members in reference to the parishes offer to allocate a portion of their mitigation dollars towards the project, Functional Elements stages, funding, and other information associated with the project.

#### **Department of Transportation and Development**

Christopher Knotts, Department of Transportation and Development, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 379-3015, spoke for information only. He narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Amite River Basin Numerical Model Development Update" and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records. Mr. Knotts and Mr. Tingle addressed questions from the task force members.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Colonel Michael N. Clancy, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 250-0359, spoke for information only. Colonel Clancy gave an overview of the Corps of Engineers' continuous involvement with the Comite River Diversion Canal Project, federal funding, and other projects with DOTD. He addressed questions from the task force members.

Mr. Mark Wingate, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 862-2204, spoke for information only. He addressed Senator Erdey's question in reference to federal funding and commitment to the project.

**Amite River Board of Commissioners**

Dietmar Rietschier, Amite River Basin Commission, 3535 South Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Suite 135, Baton Rouge, LA 70816, (225) 296-4900, spoke for information only. He narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District", and provided a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. Larry Bankston, Amite River Basin Commission, 8708 Jefferson Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 766-3800, spoke for information only. He addressed the task force in reference to a document with detailed analysis of the status of utilities relocation that is required by the Corps, and deauthorization of the Comite River Project, or a portion of it to receive Hazard Mitigation monies.

Mr. Rietschier and Mr. Bankston addressed questions from the task force members.

**East Baton Rouge Public Works**

Mr. Fred Raiford, City of Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish,, (no address provided), (225) 389-3159, spoke for information only. He stated that the City of Baton Rouge is still committed to the \$15 million of their mitigation dollars to the project.

**Livingston Public Works**

On behalf of Mayor Ricks of Livingston Parish, Mr. Mark Harrell stated that the parish has committed \$10 million dollars. He advised the task force that Mr. Casey Tinkle has the parish's approval to represent the parish in moving the process forward.

Mr. Casey Tingle advised the task force that he is the point person for the Comite River Diversion Canal Project and the Hazardous Mitigation dollars. At the request of Representative Hodges, he gave a recap of the timeline process and addressed questions from the task force members.

**Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority**

Mr. David Peterson, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration, (no card provided), spoke for information only. He gave a brief statement on working with DOTD in collaborating and providing information, and working with DOTD on water shed studies. Mr. Peterson addressed questions from the task force members.

**VI. CLOSING REMARKS**

Representative Hodges announced that the next Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force meeting will be January 18, 2018, to receive updates to move forward with the project.

**VII. ANNOUNCEMENT**

There were no announcements.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Valarie Hodges, chairwoman  
Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_