

**Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force**

**Minutes of Meeting  
2018 - 2019 Interim  
November 7, 2018**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force, called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Valarie Hodges, chairwoman  
Senator Bodi White, vice chairman  
Representative Rogers J. Pope

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative Barbara Carpenter  
Senator Regina Barrow  
Senator Dale Erdey

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mark Harrell  
Patrick Landry for Christopher Knotts  
Jerry Passman  
Brandon Rogillio  
J. R. Saucier  
Paul Sawyer  
Tom Stephens  
Brenda Zeringue

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jason Lanclos  
Jerry Thibeau

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

House:

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

Senate:

### **III. OPENING REMARKS**

Representative Hodges thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She congratulated Congressman Garret Graves on his reelection to Congress and asked other elected officials who won in the 2018 November election to stand and be recognized.

Representative Hodges gave an overview of House Concurrent Resolution No. 51 of the 2014 Regular Session and its purpose for the Comite River Diversion Canal Project. She also discussed funding for the project.

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

#### **U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers and Department of Transportation and Development**

The U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) jointly prepared and presented to the task force a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Comite River Diversion Project Status Update" and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. Bobby Duplantier, USACE, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 862-1037, spoke for information only. He narrated a portion of the PowerPoint presentation and addressed questions from the task force members. He discussed the USACE organization chart, the projects pertaining to the Comite River Diversion Canal Project, and the tentative delivery plan and schedule for the project.

Mr. Patrick Landry, DOTD, no address provided, (337) 501-8037, spoke for information only. He narrated a portion of the PowerPoint presentation and addressed questions from the task force members. He discussed the DOTD organization chart, the non-federal partner roles, DOTD project tasks for the years 2018-2022, the US Highway 61 utilities, the continuation of the bridge design and construction throughout the life of the project, and the simultaneous construction task along the Comite Channel.

Mr. Durund Elzey, USACE, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, (504) 862-2204, spoke for information only. He discussed and addressed questions from the task force members in reference to the Blackwater Bayou and other bayous in East Baton Rouge Parish.

#### **Congressman Garret Graves**

Congressman Garrett Graves, 6th Congressional District, 430 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, (202) 225-3901, spoke for information only. He gave a congressional update on the USACE's accountability, annual funding, keeping the project on schedule, and other

matters pertaining to the Comite River Diversion Canal Project.

*Senator White in the chair.*

*Representative Hodges in the chair.*

DOTD and USACE addressed questions from Representative Hodges and Mr. Sawyer in reference to the process for the design of the Highway 61 Bridge and recreational features to the Comite River Project.

### **Amite River Basin Commission**

Mr. Dietmar Rietschier, Amite River Basin Commissioner, 3535 South Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Suite 135, Baton Rouge, LA 70815, (225) 296-4900, spoke for information only. He gave updates on the Amite River Basin Commission's progress on the Comite River Canal Project.

Mr. Larry Bankston, Amite River Basin Commission, 8708 Jefferson Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, no telephone number provided, spoke for information only. He gave updates on the Amite River Basin Commission's progress on the Comite River Canal Project.

### **East Baton Rouge Parish**

Mr. Fred Raiford, City of Baton Rouge, 222 St. Louis Street, no city provided, (225) 389-3159, spoke for information only. He gave a brief overview on the City of Baton Rouge's maintenance cost for recreational use and drainage and their agreement for the Comite River Diversion Canal Project. Mr. Raiford addressed questions from the task force members.

## **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Kindal Coates, 11958 River Highlands, no city provided, (225) 505-0718, spoke for information only. She gave a brief statement on the Flood of 2016.

## **VII. CLOSING REMARKS**

Representative Hodges again thanked everyone for attending the task force meeting and advised them to have a safe Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chairman Valarie Hodges  
Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force

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