



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.

PO Box 65239, Baton Rouge, LA 70896
8480 Bluebonnet Blvd. Suite F, Baton Rouge, LA 70810

(225) 344-6707
www.lawildlifefed.org

August 8, 2025

Attention: ASA Adam Telle
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G St. NW
Washington, DC, 20314

Via: askthecorps@usace.army.mil

Dear Secretary Telle,

As we approach the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the Army Corps must finally address the deadly and destructive impacts of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) shipping channel. Louisiana communities deserve better. This long-overdue wetland restoration effort is critical for communities in Southeast Louisiana, many of which are still recovering from the devastation brought by Katrina and tied to the MRGO. Though Congress mandated action on MRGO after Katrina, communities have yet to see the Army Corps restoration to address the catastrophic damages from the MRGO.

You have an opportunity to provide leadership to finally deliver results for communities devastated due to the MRGO and over a million people who depend on restored and healthy wetlands in the impacted area. At this milestone anniversary, your commitment to the following needs is critical:

- 1) \$5 million in FY 26 work plan discretionary funding to advance design
- 2) FY 27 construction capability and funding
- 3) Real estate plan that allows use of long-term easements (20- to 50-years) where necessary to implement restoration

Constructed in the 1950s, the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet federal shipping channel impacted over a million acres of coastal habitat and destroyed tens of thousands of acres of protective wetlands that historically buffered the Greater New Orleans area during storms. Despite being recognized as a "hurricane highway" and repeated pleas for closure, it took the deadly disaster incurred during Hurricane Katrina to finally close the channel to navigation.

Restoration to address the impacts of the MRGO to the Greater New Orleans area was called for by Congress in 2007 and has been planned, but to date, no funding has been allocated for implementation of the Army Corps' MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan. Without this restoration, the MRGO impacts continue to pose a significant risk.

With over a decade of Army Corps inaction on restoring the MRGO Ecosystem due to cost share disputes, there should be no further delays. The Army Corps should immediately advance design work to restore the wetlands destroyed because of that channel. Any study update needs resulting from the Army Corps' long-delayed action should not slow these efforts. The damage to communities and the ecosystem from the MRGO federal shipping channel is so severe that the delays in restoring this ecosystem and aiding communities in their recovery are hard to comprehend. But those invested in building more resilient coastal ecosystems in Louisiana have not forgotten what is due.

Your leadership can change this situation. In carrying out this work, the Army Corps should engage impacted communities and stakeholders as an integral voice and partner in ensuring a more holistic recovery from damages. Community concerns, points of interest, and opportunities for the local workforce to be a part of the restoration economy in communities devastated by the shipping channel are an important part of the restoration and recovery.

Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that represents 23 affiliate organizations and more than 11,000 members dedicated to the conservation of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources.

Thank you for your attention to these comments. We look forward to working together to implement the restoration due for Southeast Louisiana.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Triche
Executive Director
Louisiana Wildlife Federation