

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 9, 2018

The Honorable R.D. James  
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)  
108 Army Pentagon  
Room 3E446  
Washington, DC 20310

Lieutenant General Todd Semonite  
Chief of Engineers  
Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Secretary James and LTG Semonite,

In the recently passed Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Omnibus), the Army Corps of Engineers received \$3.63 billion under the Operations and Maintenance account, an increase of \$481 million from FY 2017. These funds will be eligible to fund critical projects in Louisiana that represent the three main mission areas of the Corps. We write to you today to reiterate our full support for the restoration of full funding for the Freshwater Bayou Lock and ask for your consideration that the additional funding provided in the Omnibus under this account be used at the Freshwater Bayou Lock.

As you know, Freshwater Bayou Lock plays a critical role in our nation's commerce, typically ranking in the top 10 nationwide in terms of commercial lockage. It provides access from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and Intracoastal City for the offshore oil supply and commercial fishing industries and serves as a mechanism for salinity control of the Mermentau Basin. However, the proposed FY 2019 funding for lock operations has been cut from \$1.4 million to \$759 thousand. Without full funding, Freshwater Bayou Lock will be unable to meet the level of service mandated by the Inland Marine Transportation Systems (IMTS) standards adopted Corps-wide and will be forced to drastically reduce its hours of operations.

With the additional monies made available to the Corps through the FY18 Omnibus, we respectfully ask that you restore full funding for this critical project. We look forward to continuing working with you to ensure that the Freshwater Bayou Lock is able to continue operating within its normal parameters.

Respectfully,

*Bill Cassidy, M.D.*

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Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator

*John Kennedy*

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John Kennedy  
United States Senator

*Clay Higgins*

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Clay Higgins  
United States Congressman

**Cc:** Colonel Michael N. Clancy