



Levee Issues Alliance Supports FPD Council's Decision to Proceed with Construction on Next Projects in Metro East Levee System

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The Levee Issues Alliance (LIA) today announced its support for the decision by the Flood Prevention District (FPD) Council to perform construction work on two levee projects that the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has designed. The LIA is confident the FPD Council and its engineering partner AMEC will complete the projects on time and on budget based on their outstanding track record with the other projects they have managed.

The projects in question are aimed at stopping underseepage of about 8,000 feet of existing levees in the Wood River Drainage and Levee District and making other improvements to the Metro East Sanitary District levee. The Levee Issues Alliance is committed to getting the entire project done on schedule, and fully supports the Flood Prevention District Council taking the steps necessary to complete the work by the end of 2015 deadline.

“The LIA has confidence the FPD Council can reduce the risk of delay at a time when the Route 3 corridor in the American Bottom is starting to grow again,” noted Rich Conner, chairman of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, which administers the Levee Issues Alliance. We must succeed and secure FEMA re-accreditation of the entire Metro East Levee system. Failure is not an option.”

A working group of the LIA has been meeting regularly with representatives of the FPD Council and the USACE to facilitate the ongoing dialogue between the two and gather the information necessary to fulfill its role as the watchdog for the project.

“We appreciate the hard work of the USACE team in completing the design in a timely manner and expect they will quickly approve the 408 permit for their own design, allowing the FPD to move into construction within the necessary time frame,” added Conner. “The funding is already in place for the FPD Council to complete all of the locally funded work thanks to the leadership and decisive action by our three County Board Chairmen. Several projects are already underway and we look forward to work moving forward on these projects in the near future.”

The LIA is simultaneously encouraging the Corps in its efforts to move forward with improvements to the Mel Price reach project that is also necessary for the system to reach accreditation. That particular project is 100 percent the responsibility of the USACE and much work remains to have it completed by the 2015 deadline set for the rest of the levee improvement project.

Those interested in learning more about the levee improvement project can visit www.stlmetroeastlevees.org. The website includes a clock counting down to the anticipated completion date for the total project, additional background information on this issue and a tab to sign up to become a member of the Levee Issues Alliance, which represents the 150,000 residents and 55,000 workers in the American Bottom whose lives and livelihoods depend on the timely completion of the Metro East levee improvements. The improvements are essential to ensuring that the levee system continues to be accredited by FEMA and to safeguard the homes and businesses that lie behind it in the flood plain area that encompasses 25 individual communities in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties. They also will help to reassure existing and potential new businesses considering expanding in or relocating to the American Bottom that Southwestern Illinois is a place where they can invest with confidence.

The St. Louis Metro East Levee Issues Alliance serves as the organizational framework for the regional, public/private effort to help prevent the unintended economic consequences produced by FEMA’s update of the flood insurance rate maps in our region. The Alliance’s coalition of business and civic organizations, community leaders and concerned citizens is currently working to help ensure the timely completion of the levee improvements so they meet new federal standards and continue to protect the lives and livelihoods in the American Bottom, which is home to 156,000 residents and 55,000 existing jobs.