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Charlotte A. Randolph, *Parish President*

PRESS RELEASE

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FEMA to Consider Levees in Reevaluation of Flood Elevation Maps *Policy Change Could Reduce Flood Insurance Rates in Affected Communities*

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Thursday agreed to discontinue its use of “without levee” analyses as it pertains to flood maps. The policy change will improve FEMA’s flood map accuracy and could reduce flood insurance rates for affected communities. Local officials had been advocating for the National Flood Insurance Program to consider any and all existing flood protection systems, such as the South Lafourche Levee System, when determining base flood elevations.

“This was a major victory for our community today,” said Parish President Charlotte Randolph. “We’ve been fighting to get FEMA to recognize the South Lafourche Levee System because we know we have an effective system, and they were treating it like it didn’t exist.”

President Randolph also cautioned, however, that this battle is not yet over.

“Now FEMA will look at individual communities, like South Lafourche, and analyze the flood protection in each community,” said Randolph. “We want to make sure we have our local experts in contact with FEMA the whole step of the way to ensure they fully understand the level of protection our system truly provides.”

Perhaps the most pivotal move in this struggle came last month when 27 U.S. Senators and 49 Members of Congress respectively sent letters to FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate urging him to reconsider the inclusion of *all* flood protection systems, not merely those that were up to federal standards. The letter argued that ignoring the “physical reality” of these systems “reduces the precision of flood maps and erodes public confidence in the flood mapping process itself.”

The Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee and the Justice & Public Safety Committee, both of the National Association of Counties, recently unanimously passed an emergency resolution sponsored by Parish President Randolph in support of FEMA recognizing these structures.

In his announcement yesterday, Fugate indicated that FEMA will withhold issuing final determinations for these communities until the new approach has been finalized and implemented.

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