

# The Times-Picayune

Sunday, July 15, 2007

## **VICTIMS OF MR-GO HAVE WAITED LONG ENOUGH**

Re: "Closure on MR-GO," Our Opinions, July 6.

To the Editor,

Like many other south Louisianians, I am relieved the Army Corps is recommending that the MRGO be permanently and completely closed ("Closure on MR-GO," Friday, July 06, 2007). For years, the people of St. Bernard have watched with dread as the MRGO slowly expanded, eating away at the healthy cypress forest and destroying thousands of acres of wetlands. As the salty waters of the Gulf crept further inland, communities like Chalmette and New Orleans East became increasingly vulnerable to storm surges and hurricanes that swept up the MRGO. Katrina's devastation was proof of this increased threat.

Finally – after Katrina showed the nation that the MRGO was a "hurricane superhighway" into St. Bernard and New Orleans – Washington came to realize what the people of south Louisiana have been saying for years: MRGO must go!

Shortly after the storms, I worked in Congress to pass legislation to stop any further dredging of the MRGO. We wanted to make sure no further damage was done and the channel could begin to silt in while the Corps came up with a plan for the MRGO's long-term future. For the past two years, not one dime of taxpayer money has been wasted on further dredging of the MRGO.

After years of fighting to stop this environmental disaster, we in south Louisiana finally have the federal government's support to permanently close MRGO. I will keep working with the rest of the Louisiana delegation to make sure the Corps' follows through with their recommendation and completely closes the MRGO, and we begin rebuilding the wetlands and natural barriers that will protect us from future storms. The people of St. Bernard and New Orleans have already paid too high a price for the government's inaction on closing MRGO. They shouldn't have to wait any longer to get rid of this deadly threat.

Sincerely,

Rep. Charlie Melancon (LA-03)