

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1803

May 8, 2011

Rear Admiral Mary Landry
Commander
Eighth District
United States Coast Guard
Hale Boggs Federal Building
500 Poydras Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Colonel Edward Fleming
Commander
New Orleans District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
7400 Leake Avenue,
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

The Honorable Robert Barham
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries,
2000 Quail Dr.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898

Mr. Mark Cooper
Director
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
& Emergency Preparedness
7667 Independence Blvd
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Dear Rear Admiral Landry, Colonel Fleming, Secretary Barham and Director Cooper:

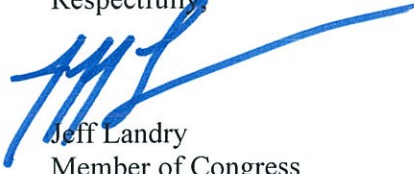
It has come to my attention, through rumors and unconfirmed sources, that there are plans to halt commercial fishing operations within the Atchafalaya Basin System in advance of the anticipated opening of the Morganza Spillway and the operation of the Atchafalaya Floodway.

Considering the hardships that will be borne by the people who live and work within this system, I believe that summarily halting commercial fishing activities prematurely would only intensify this hardship. While concerns for safety and property are paramount, commercial fishing activities should not be terminated until it is absolutely essential to preserve life and property. Surely, these activities should continue unabated until river conditions, if such conditions materialize, threaten the safety of life and property. Commercial fishing operations should be allowed to continue until such eminent threat arises, not one moment earlier.

The people of the Atchafalaya Basin have endured the hardships of nature for centuries and have always found a way to prosper. No one knows that river system better than the people who, for generations, have lived and worked within that system. Natural hardships can be accepted, those created unnecessarily by government interventions and bureaucratic decision making are unacceptable.

I implore that any decision regarding the operation of commercial fishing within the Atchafalaya Basin be made with the utmost considerations for the hardship such decision will cast upon the people of these communities. Additionally, any decision should take into consideration the necessity and need for these people to earn a living. Keep in mind that many will be in need of every financial resource available to rebuild their lives in the wake of this historic flood.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JL', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Landry
Member of Congress