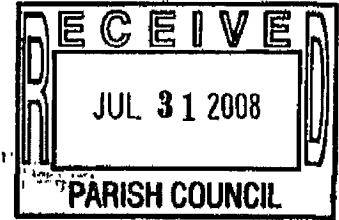




JESSE DUPLANTIS MINISTRIES
Preaching the Gospel to the World



July 29, 2008

United States Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District Regulatory Branch
7400 Leake Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

RE: Permit Application Number: MVN-1999-866-ETT
Applicant's Name: Magnolia Fleet, LLC, c/o Richard Wright
Objection to Proposed Expansion of Barge Fleeting Facility in St. Charles Parish

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter is an objection to the expansion of the Barge Fleeting Facility in St. Charles Parish. This letter also requests that a public hearing be held to consider the application for expansion.

There are numerous reasons this expansion should be denied, many of which have been noted objections by St. Charles Parish officials and residents in past attempts to expand the use of the subject location. Considering the timing (three years post-Katrina's levee breaches), location (dangerous river bend adjacent to residential population), and proposed expansion of this site to industrial use in front of a residential neighborhood, we, along with our neighbors and fellow residents, were astonished to think such a proposal would even be considered. In addition, there was a barge accident on the River just days ago, necessitating the closure of the River for an unknown time, causing extensive pollution, environmental damage, and disruption of commercial activities along the River. One could only imagine if such an incident had occurred at the proposed location in St. Charles Parish.

This is not a mere expansion, but a proposed new use of this property as an industrial site, with an accompanying gated parking lot and access road. This expansion will invariably lead to further air, noise, and water pollution in a residential neighborhood. We would like to stress that residential development in St. Charles Parish has grown extensively since the original permit was granted. With this growth, the recreational use of the levee and surrounding area has been greatly enhanced. There are now walking and bike paths on the levee, public access ramps to the levee, not to mention expansion of local schools and playgrounds. This proposed use is not only inconsistent with the residential nature of the immediate surroundings, but would negatively impact the use and further development of these areas by the Parish. Also, this proposed expansion is in front of Ormond Plantation, a recognized historical site.

Further expansion of this site will affect public safety. In addition to obvious hazards such as increased vehicular traffic crossing the levee that has a walking and bike path frequented by young children, the expansion (on a major bend in the River) poses the potential threat for a major river accident. Lest we forget the potential for a levee breach as a result of an accident and/or the further

compromising of the levee footing and removal of the buffer afforded by the batture. Another consideration is whether this company would have the resources to cover such losses, commercial or otherwise, in the event of a serious accident or a levee breach.

Another concern is the absence of a policing or enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance with the application. The proposal calls for a parking lot. Obviously there will be workers at the site. Are we to believe this will not be a drop-off point for tug boats and barges? Will this applicant moor a houseboat at that site for workers? What about hazardous materials at the site? Again, we bring up the recent barge accident that led to thousands of gallons of fuel to spill into the River. This applicant company has already violated public trust by exceeding the scope of the permits that were previously approved.

As property owners and business owners, we are in full support of one's rights to use one's land as they wish. However, we are also cognizant of the balance between a landowner's use of their property versus the public interests. We also fully understand the commercial importance of the Mississippi River as a navigable waterway for passage and mooring of vessels. However, at a time when the corps is aggressively maintaining and improving levee protection throughout the metropolitan area, we cannot imagine the Corps approving a company placing a road and parking lot at the foot of the river side of the levee.

Thanking you in advance for your time and attention to this matter.

We Remain,

Jesse + Cathy Duplantis
Jesse and Catherine Duplantis

JD:meh

cc: State of Louisiana, Department of Environmental Quality
St Charles Parish Department of Planning and Zoning, Mrs. Kim Marousak
State Representative, Gary L. Smith, Jr.

