

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2405

November 23, 2020

COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND
ADMINISTRATION

Col. Robert A. Hilliard
Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Vicksburg District
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39138-3435

Dear Commander Hilliard:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Proposed Plan outlined in the Draft Supplement No. 2 to the 1982 Yazoo Area Pump Project Final Environmental Impact Statement.

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) clearly demonstrates that the new Proposed Plan will not only protect lives, homes, and property from catastrophic flooding, but also provide significant benefits to wetlands, terrestrial, aquatic, and wildlife resources throughout this large area of Mississippi. As you know, the significant flooding the area has experienced in nine out of the last 10 years has affected homes, businesses, roads and bridges, other infrastructure, and the environmental resources associated with area's vast agricultural and forested lands. Improved flood protection that will come with having the Yazoo Backwater pumps in place will benefit all area residents, including low-income and minority populations, and bring economic improvements to the state and the nation.

Actual flood events over the past 10 years, combined with new environmental data, has proven that only good can come from construction of the pumps. Concerns expressed about previous project proposals are no longer valid. Given that approximately 55 inches of annual rainfall sustain nearly 90 percent of area wetlands rather than inundation caused by backwater flooding, the slow and gradual removal of floodwaters will have no impact on wetlands. Further, the proposed installation of 34 groundwater wells, along with thousands of acres of reforestation, will improve environmental flows in 9,321 acres of streams, and achieve net gains across all environmental categories.

Improved flood protection for the Yazoo Backwater Area is long overdue, and I commend the Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District for working diligently to release the Draft SEIS for public review. I look forward to the Corps releasing the Final SEIS and signing a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Yazoo Area Pump Project as swiftly as possible.

Sincerely,



CINDY HYDE-SMITH
United States Senator