



FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Your Flood Defense System

PRESS RELEASE

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FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY TO TURN OVER PUMP STATIONS TO ST. BERNARD PARISH

New Orleans, LA – For more than five years now, the Flood Protection Authority (FPA) has worked diligently to resolve Lake Borgne Basin Levee District's unsustainable financial predicament while continuing to meet the Authority's obligation to ensure the physical and operational integrity of the regional flood risk management system in St. Bernard, Orleans and East Jefferson Parishes. These efforts have included hiring freezes, pay freezes, grant funding, and attempts to pass a tax millage that was twice voted down by St. Bernard Parish residents.

For the past two years, the FPA has negotiated in good faith with St. Bernard Parish to reach an agreement for the transition of responsibility for pumping and drainage to the Parish on terms that preserve the FPA's ability to properly maintain and manage the perimeter flood defense system in St. Bernard Parish. In the face of a negotiation stalemate and further worsening financial status of the Lake Borgne Basin Levee District, in June 2018, the Flood Protection Authority Board of Commissioners, relying on state law, voted to divest all pumping and drainage functions in St. Bernard Parish effective January 1, 2019. The Board also voted to give the Parish over \$1 million to assist with their assumption of pumping and drainage function in St. Bernard Parish. Based on the representation that parish leadership desired to reengage in negotiations regarding the terms of the transfer, and to minimize costs associated with defending the lawsuits filed against the FPA by the Parish, the Board approved further delays totaling an additional six months beyond January 1, 2019. The last approved stay of the June 2018 board action expires on July 1, 2019.

Recently, with impressive leadership from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and the Governor's Office, negotiators for the Parish and the FPA agreed to strongly recommend to their respective entities a solution that represented a demanding but smart compromise. That compromise provided that, in connection with the Parish assuming pumping and drainage functions in St. Bernard Parish, CPRA would invest \$4 million to improve pump stations and drainage canals, the Parish would receive a millage which generates revenue of about \$1.4 million per year, and the FPA would give St. Bernard Parish an additional \$3 million upfront.

The Flood Protection Authority Board of Commissioners was prepared to approve the tentative agreement at its scheduled meeting on June 20. Unfortunately, the Board was informed at that meeting that the St. Bernard Parish Council had chosen to reject the negotiated agreement outright. As a result of the Parish Council's refusal to compromise, the FPA now must move forward with the Board mandate to divest pumping and drainage functions in St. Bernard Parish effective Monday, July 1, 2019, and cease operations supporting these functions on that date.

The FPA remains willing to have the Parish assume pumping and drainage responsibilities on the terms of the agreement brokered by CPRA between the FPA and the Parish. Though day-to-day operations supporting the pumping and drainage function in St. Bernard Parish will be suspended effective Monday, July 1, should the Parish remain unwilling to assume its responsibility for pumping and drainage, in the event of an approaching tropical event or when the National Weather Service predicts a heavy rain event due to severe weather conditions, the FPA will undertake critical pumping operations necessitated by the emergent circumstances. As always, the FPA is committed to acting in the best interests of the residents and taxpayers of St. Bernard, East Jefferson, and Orleans Parishes in operating and maintaining our region's critical flood protection infrastructure.