



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

August 17, 2026

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500

President Trump,

Sir, in October 2025, my office delivered a white paper to Office of Management and Budget Director Russ Vought outlining reforms to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Civil Works mission to improve the efficiency and execution of federal construction efforts. The history of the Vermilion River in Louisiana's 3rd District demonstrates why these reforms are necessary.

The federal government has recognized the need to improve the Vermilion River for nearly a century. The Flood Control Act of 1936 established that the federal government should "participate in the improvement of navigable waters or their tributaries, including watersheds thereof, for flood-control purposes if the benefits to whomsoever they may accrue are in excess of the estimated costs, and if the lives and social security of people are otherwise adversely affected." The Corps' subsequent 1941 study found the proposed Bayou Teche and Vermilion River improvements economically justified and included within the Flood Control Act of 1941. Congress authorized the project for Operations and Maintenance in 1956 with channel parameters of 9 feet deep by 100 feet wide from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to mile 52. Despite direct congressional authorization and Corps' justification, the last recorded dredging effort that took place for the Vermilion River project was in 1998.

Since coming to Congress, I have met with constituents, local governments, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District and federal officials to provide the funding and facilitate the hydrological modeling needed to advance the project. After the historic 2016 flood that impacted more than 7,000 structures across Acadiana, I facilitated the Corps and top researchers at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette to develop an objective hydrologic and hydraulic analysis of spot dredging the Vermilion River. In over nine years of official well-documented engagement, my office has worked consistently with the Corps to support the

execution of spot dredging the Vermilion River. Throughout this process, the Corps repeatedly indicated that the completed studies, congressional authorization, and the \$50 million secured within the FY22 Work Plan would provide the basis to move the project forward.

I have continued to push for project execution and for the Corps to follow the law. After I delivered my white paper “[Unleashing Federal Construction and Eliminating Bureaucratic Obstacles: Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works](#),” that specifically outlined the Corps civil works backlogs and delays including spot dredging the Vermilion River, the Corps approached my office with its “Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork Initiative.” This initiative was largely informed from my white paper. I personally met with Assistant Secretary Telle where a shared vision of execution on delayed projects and the necessity of spot dredging the Vermilion River was discussed.

The Corps has continued to delay action. In June 2026, the Corps and the University of Louisiana Lafayette conducted an updated H&H analysis without my office’s involvement, despite the extensive analysis already completed. Subsequently, Lafayette Consolidated Government was informed that the Corps would no longer pursue spot dredging the Vermilion River.

After years of study, congressional direction, and \$50 million in taxpayer funding, the Corps has yet to remove a single bucket of sediment from the Vermilion River in over 25 years. I urge your full and fair consideration of all factors to address bureaucratic barriers that have prevented spot dredging the Vermilion River from moving forward.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Adam Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Civil Works

Colonel Scotty Autin, Commander and District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps New Orleans District