



November 2, 2020

USACE Galveston District
ATTN: BBTRS
P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229

Via email to: BBTRS@usace.army.mil

Subject: The Energy Corridor District Comments Regarding the Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study Interim Report

Greetings Col. Timothy R. Vail,

On behalf of The Energy Corridor District's ("the District") stakeholders, we write to provide comments related to the Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study Interim Report.

Geographically located in West Houston, adjacent to both Addicks and Barker Reservoirs, and as a part of the Buffalo Bayou Watershed, the District is home to the headquarters and regional offices of prominent global firms within the energy sector and beyond, numerous small businesses, and residents alike. The District is a major employment center and destination in the Greater Houston region and was severely impacted during Hurricane Harvey from reservoir releases. As such, we have a keen interest in the success of this study and any subsequent projects that lead to the development and/or improvement of flood resiliency for the protection and preservation of life, property, and the District's long-term economic vitality.

While the District is not endorsing any alternative plans identified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the subject study, we recognize that it is a necessity to invest in flood resilience measures across the Houston region. Given the District's location, we are specifically interested in flood resilience investments and operational improvements at the Addicks and Barker Reservoirs. Investments of this nature can yield immediate and scalable benefits, while operational improvements would significantly reduce the potential possibility for reservoir releases during extreme weather events.

Likewise, the feasibility of alternative plans for watersheds both upstream and downstream of the Addicks and Barker Reservoirs, must also be strongly examined. Aspects of such alternatives might present opportunities to not only provide flood protection benefits within the District, but across the Houston region.

Notwithstanding the District's support for flood resilience investments, we recognize these improvements must be done in an environmentally conscious, and a socially and fiscally responsible manner that strongly solicits and values public stakeholder input. Preserving the greenspaces available within the reservoir system and watersheds, present ecological benefits, while providing social benefits through public use.

During the District's participation in several of the USACE's Interim Report Public Information Sessions, the importance of a local partner to support advancement of any future alternative plan(s) was

emphasized. While the Harris County Flood Control District is the local agency with the relevant mission to support such work, The Energy Corridor District believes that to adequately address the breadth of flood resiliency investments needed in the region, it would require significant support from numerous partners at all levels of government. Similarly, it would also require strong public support. In order for this study to yield the expected results, this coalition of partners must be steadfast in its commitment to achieving the desired and agreed upon engineering intent of the study, while securing the necessary financial support.

Lastly, the District recommends that as the USACE continues to advance the subject study, additional consideration for how the proposed alternatives fit into an overall comprehensive flood resiliency strategy be vetted and included as part of the study. The need for major flood resiliency infrastructure investments is obvious, but strategies that allow for more immediate and scalable resiliency projects to compliment larger investments, would provide measured benefits sooner and begin to reduce future negative impacts to the region.

The decisions made from this study will have significant impact on the District, Greater West Houston, and the Houston region. The District firmly supports smart investments resulting in flood resilience measures to protect and preserve life, property, and the District's long-term economic vitality. Given the geographical proximity of the District to the reservoirs and the Buffalo Bayou Watershed, we strongly encourage the USACE to proceed with thoughtful and strategic evaluations of alternatives that values public input and ecological concerns, maintains or improves social benefits of greenspaces, and considers realistic fiscal possibilities. Ultimately, this approach can build the necessary coalition of support to advance the overall investments needed to protect the region for the long-term.

We look forward to additional public involvement related to this study. The District serves as a partner who is committed to continued dialogue in this process with the ultimate goal of securing meaningful flood resilience investments.

Sincerely,



Elijah J. Williams
Executive Director



David W. Hightower
President, Board of Directors