

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

August 22, 2008

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Chariman Boxer:

I am writing to express my concern regarding a critical hurricane recovery matter and to request the Armed Services Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee investigate the situation.

Recently, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) transmitted a letter to the President detailing an investigation into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The OSC investigation was in response to a whistleblower's allegations that the Corps installed defective pumping equipment and conducted improper contracting procedures. The OSC indicated that the information was also sent to the Senate Armed Services Committee. To be of assistance, I am enclosing a copy of the OSC's letter.

The possibility of a dysfunctional flood protection system threatens the entire recovery of South Louisiana. The OSC correctly notes in a separate analysis that, "we can ill afford to take unnecessary safety risks due to faulty pumping equipment." Furthermore, the possibility that New Orleans faces a risk of failure of the flood protection system because of inappropriate government contracting is unacceptable.

The OSC, charged the Department of Defense (DOD) with conducting an investigation into the allegations of defective pumps and contract irregularities. The DOD returned a report that the OSC found to be "superficial and dismissive." Resultantly, the OSC found that "a thorough and impartial investigation conducted by independent professional engineers into these matters is warranted."

Apparently, the DOD has agreed to conduct an independent investigation. While this is encouraging that the DOD will give a more thorough review, I think it is appropriate that Congress remain vigilant in its oversight of this matter.

Because of my desire to ensure functional flood protection in Louisiana, I request that the Armed Services Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee conduct an investigation into this matter. I am happy to assist you in developing the investigation or in whatever way you require. Finally, I appreciate your attention to this critical matter.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senate

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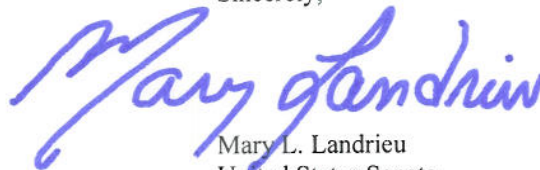
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