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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Withdrawal of Notice of Intent (NOI) To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Mississippi River and Tributaries-Morganza, Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico Hurricane Protection - Houma Navigation Canal General Re-Evaluation

AGENCY: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent; withdrawal.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is issuing this notice to advise Federal, State, and local governmental agencies and the public that USACE is withdrawing the notice of intent for the preparation of the DEIS pursuant to Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 103-316) for the Mississippi River and Tributaries-Morganza, Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico Hurricane Protection-Houma Navigation Canal Deepening (HNCD) General Re-Evaluation which was published in the Federal Register on May 23, 2003. Since publication of the NOI, the project authority has changed; HNCD was conditionally authorized under Section 403 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020. Additionally, the USACE has since determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) rather than an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the appropriate level of environmental documentation.

DATES: The notice of intent to prepare an EIS published in the Federal Register on May 23, 2003 (68 FR 28199), is withdrawn as of **[DATE OF PUBLICATION in the FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans; 7400 Leake Ave, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the withdrawal of the Notice of Intent can be directed to Elizabeth Behrens, (504) 862-2025 or Elizabeth.H.Behrens@usace.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The study was previously authorized under Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 103-316) for the Mississippi River and Tributaries-Morganza, Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico Hurricane Protection-Houma Navigation Canal Deepening (HNCD) General Re-Evaluation and scoped as an EIS. Subsequently, the project was submitted as a Section 203 Integrated Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD). HNCD was conditionally authorized under Section 403 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020 pending resolution of comments and completion of NEPA. Since release of the NOI, it was determined that a portion of environmental impacts resulting from the HNC deepening would be addressed through operations of the HNC Lock Complex. Salinity thresholds are included for HNC lock complex operations within the draft Water Control Plan developed for Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction Project SEIS (2026). The reduction in anticipated impacts from salinity intrusion resulted in the change from EIS to EA as the appropriate level NEPA documentation.

Resolution of comments from the NOI 03-13010 (68 FR 28199) and any future Federal action related to the Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 103-316) for the Mississippi River and Tributaries-Morganza, Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico Hurricane Protection-Houma Navigation Canal Deepening (HNCD) General Re-

Evaluation will comply with the requirements of NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and Department of War National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and other related environmental review requirements. The USACE will initiate a separate environmental review process for the federal action pursuant to Section 403 of WRDA 2020. The USACE will notify the public in advance of the availability of the draft EA through public notice.

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