

FHWA-LA-EIS-01-01-F
STATE PROJECT NO. 700-29-0112
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. HP-NH-T021(002)



RECORD OF DECISION

LOUISIANA 1 IMPROVEMENTS GOLDEN MEADOW TO PORT FOURCHON

January 2003

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

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STATE PROJECT NO. 700-29-0112
F.A.P. NO. HP-NH-TO21(002)
LOUISIANA 1 IMPROVEMENTS
GOLDEN MEADOW TO PORT FOURCHON
LAFOURCHE PARISH

A. Decision

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approves the selection of the **Build Alternative**, alignment **Line A**, in agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and in cooperation with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Build Alternative, alignment Line A, was identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and was presented as the alternative recommended for selection in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). This four-lane fully controlled access, elevated highway on new location would be built in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD). Bridges would span navigable waterways. The proposed facility would be approximately 17 miles in length and would generally parallel existing Louisiana Highway 1 (LA 1) between Golden Meadow and Port Fourchon in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana. It is anticipated that due to funding constraints, the project will be built in phases as the funding becomes available.

LA 1 from I-10 at Port Allen to LA 3090 at Port Fourchon is designated as a principal arterial of the National Highway System (NHS). LA 1 is included as part of the NHS because of its intermodal link to the nation's energy supply. The proposed facility would complete the southernmost portion of this NHS route, connecting to LA 3235, an existing four-lane divided highway west of Golden Meadow. When completed, a four-lane divided highway facility would be available from LA 3090 just north of Port Fourchon, through Golden Meadow and on north to just above Galliano.

In the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the U.S. Congress designated certain highway corridors of national significance be included in the National Highway System. Twenty-one of these "High Priority Corridors" were so designated. The Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2002 further amended ISTEA, adding LA 1 from Grand Isle to its intersection with U.S. 90 as High Priority Corridor No. 44.

The proposed project satisfies the logical termini and section of independent utility criteria established by FHWA and would provide independent utility even if no additional transportation improvements in the region were made. Furthermore, construction of the project may be staged or programmed for discrete construction elements as funding

permits. Funding has not been identified for the entire project and several sources are being considered, including tolls.

The compilation and mapping of sensitive environmental resources resulted in a constraint map used for developing several alignments. Detailed alignments were developed that would first avoid, then minimize impacts to sensitive resources. Three alignments were developed for the build alternative.

Line A, after crossing the Hurricane Protection Levee at Golden Meadow, traverses over open marsh in a direct line from Golden Meadow to Leeville. (A connection to existing LA 1 would be provided near the northern terminus in Golden Meadow as would also a direct connection from LA 3235.) In anticipation of the removal of the existing LA 1 lift span structure over Bayou Lafourche, connections to existing LA 1 are provided from the LA 1 improvements road project in the vicinity of the community of Leeville to facilitate Leeville traffic. A connection from the LA 1 improvement would be made north of Leeville to existing LA 1 between Bollinger's Canal and Leeville. Another connection to existing LA 1 from the improved LA 1 facility would be made just south of Leeville. (This is regarded as important since it is anticipated that, as previously mentioned, due to funding constraints, the project will be built in phases with the Bayou Lafourche crossing at Leeville, identified as the most critical link and needed improvement, being the first phase. The provision of a connection from the improved facility to LA 1 both north and south of Leeville would allow a fully functional replacement of the existing LA 1 lift bridge in this first phase.) A fourth connection to existing LA 1 and LA 3090 would be provided at the southern terminus of the LA 1 improvements.

Navigation clearances are provided at three stream crossings, Bollinger Canal, Boudreaux Canal and Bayou Lafourche. Based on consultations with the property owner of the facility accessed by Bollinger Canal, a 40-foot vertical clearance above high water has been provided. A 73-foot vertical clearance will be provided at Bayou Lafourche. While a 300-foot horizontal clearance at Bayou Lafourche has been provided for the purposes of the study, continued coordination with the United States Coast Guard is warranted to confirm the minimum acceptable horizontal navigation clearance. The west bank approach to the Leeville Bridge crosses the Boudreaux Canal. This canal provides access to a number of marine service facilities. Maritime traffic serviced by these facilities is limited to inland commercial and recreational boat traffic. According to local officials, these vessels have navigation vertical clearance requirements of less than 50 feet. The Boudreaux Canal navigation clearance provided in association with the Leeville Bridge ranges from 41.6 to 63.9 feet above mean high water. (See plan and profile sheet drawings for the Leeville Bridge crossing included in the FEIS as Exhibit 2-8 and Exhibit 2-9.) As part of the permitting for the Leeville Bridge crossing, the channel and final navigation clearance for the Boudreaux Canal will have to be determined. Because much of the proposed highway will be located over marsh and open water, there will be continued coordination with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to verify that no other navigable waterways will be affected. For all navigable waterways, vertical and horizontal navigation clearances will have to be confirmed/determined during final design at each location.

B. Alternatives Considered

Five broad transportation concepts or alternatives were examined: the **No-Action (or No-Build) Alternative**, a **Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative**, a **Mass Transit Alternative**, an **Upgrade the Existing Facilities Alternative** and a **Build Alternative**. Three alignments were examined for the Build Alternative: **Line A**, **Line B**, and **Line C**. Alternatives determined not to meet the project Purpose and Need as documented in Section 1 of the DEIS and the FEIS were eliminated from further consideration, while other reasonable alternatives were identified and carried forward for detailed study.

Three of the broad transportation alternatives were considered but eliminated from further study because they did not meet the purpose and need for the project: Transportation Systems Management Alternative, Mass Transit Alternative and Upgrading the Existing Facilities Alternative.

The TSM alternative while likely resulting in localized traffic safety and level of service improvements would not meet the hurricane evacuation need identified in the project purpose and need and thus was eliminated from further consideration.

The Mass Transit Alternative is generally relevant only in urban areas with a population over 200,000. Lafourche Parish had a 2000 census population of 89, 974 (an estimated 2000 population of 90,000 was used for the DEIS and FEIS). Since the project area's population is dispersed with no single community approaching 200,000 inhabitants, mass transit was not a reasonable alternative to meet the project purpose and need and was eliminated from further consideration.

Upgrading the Existing Facilities was considered not practical for a number of engineering and environmental reasons. Soil conditions will not support at-grade roadway construction without extensive excavation of existing material and placement of fill to support the new roadway. Previous efforts in Louisiana to utilize this construction approach through marsh have proven to be not cost effective and time consuming. In addition, soil subsidence is ongoing in this area and placement of embankment tends to exacerbate the rate of subsidence. This makes maintenance of the "design" vertical profile with respect to the 100-year flood plain difficult or impossible depending on the specific soil groups.

Outside of the Larose to Golden Meadow Hurricane Protection Levee (HPL) the base flood elevations range between 10 and 13 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD). Existing elevations along LA 1 range between 2 and 3 feet NGVD. Consequently the entire existing 2-lane roadway would have to be reconstructed to raise the roadway above the minimum requirements of the 100-year base flood elevation.

The existing roadway width is approximately 80 feet and a 350-foot R/W would be required to accommodate the fill section and maintain the roadway elevation counteracting future subsidence. Approximately 25 acres of wetlands would be impacted

for each mile of roadway constructed. In addition a number of businesses, the Smith Memorial Shrine, the Griffith and Cheramie cemeteries and one prehistoric archaeological site would be impacted.

Based on the community impacts and the inability to avoid and minimize impacts to adjacent environmental resources, reconstruction of LA 1 was not considered a feasible alternative and was eliminated from further consideration.

The alternatives developed for further study were the No-Action Alternative and the Build Alternative. The Build Alternative examined three alignments: Line A, Line B and Line C.

The No-Action Alternative would not involve the construction of the LA 1 Improvements project, but would involve normal maintenance activities and planned safety improvements to LA 1. Under the No-Action Alternative, LA 1 would remain an at grade two-lane facility from Golden Meadow to LA 3090 north of Port Fourchon. As a result, the level of service, hurricane evacuation and safety issues identified in the project purpose and need, and documented in the DEIS and FEIS, would remain unresolved.

The Build Alternative examined three alignments: Line A, Line B, and Line C. These three alignments were developed using constraints derived from the environmental inventory information entered into the project Geographic Information System (GIS) and subjected to substantial comment and review from the public, local officials, and state and federal agencies. Revisions and refinements to the alignments were made based on this input.

Within some reaches of the project, two or all three alignments may be in the same location due to environmental or engineering constraints. A major consideration in the location of the three alignments was the crossing of Bayou Lafourche, Southwestern Louisiana Canal, and other navigable canals within the study area.

All three alignments tie into existing LA 3235 west of Golden Meadow. In all cases the new 4-lane elevated roadway proceeds southward and transitions into a bridge structure that crosses over the Larose to Golden Meadow HPL and continues as an elevated crossing until the end of the project when it ties back into the existing at grade facility in the vicinity of the juncture of LA 1 and LA 3090. All alignments would cross the HPL at a minimum elevation of 16.5 feet. All alignments would remain on structure throughout its entire route (except at the at grade tie ins to existing LA 1) at an elevation that exceeds the minimum requirements of the 100-year base flood elevation to provide an improved hurricane evacuation route. For the purposes of this study the minimum elevation from base of girder was established at 13 feet NGVD.

All three alignments are presented in Exhibit 2-5 of the FEIS.

Line A (Selected Alignment) after crossing the Hurricane Protection Levee at Golden Meadow, traverses over open marsh in a direct line from Golden Meadow to Leeville. (A

connection to existing LA 1 would be provided near the northern terminus in Golden Meadow as would also a direct connection from LA 3235.) A fixed span high-level bridge would be constructed over Bayou Lafourche at Leeville approximately 170 feet upstream of the existing LA 1 lift span. In anticipation of the removal of the existing LA 1 lift span structure over Bayou Lafourche, connections to existing LA 1 are provided from the LA 1 improvements road project in the vicinity of the community of Leeville to facilitate Leeville traffic. A connection from the LA 1 improvement would be made north of Leeville to existing LA 1 between Bollinger's Canal and Leeville. Another connection to existing LA 1 from the improved LA 1 facility would be made just south of Leeville. A fourth connection to existing LA 1 and LA 3090 would be provided at the southern terminus of the LA 1 improvements.

Navigation clearances are provided at two additional stream crossings besides Bayou Lafourche; these are Bollinger Canal and Boudreaux Canal. For all navigable waterways, vertical and horizontal navigation clearances will have to be confirmed/determined during final design at each location.

Line B considers an east bank route south of Golden Meadow. Line B departs from Line A south of the HPL. A connection to existing LA 1 would be provided near the Tidewater Canal. Line B crosses Bayou Lafourche approximately 1.9 miles downstream of the Leon Theriot Floodgate and proceeds in a direct route to Leeville. A fixed high-level bridge would be built over Bayou Lafourche. Due to unrestricted navigational access to existing Bayou Lafourche from the marsh on the east bank (LA 1 forms a land barrier that restricts marine access between the marsh and the bayou on the west bank), there are a number of waterway crossings that would have to be evaluated during final design for impacts to navigation. In addition the crossing of the Southwestern Louisiana Canal by this line would also require a fixed high level bridge (73-foot vertical clearance).

A third connection to existing LA 1 would be provided just south of Leeville. From Leeville, the roadway proceeds over open marsh directly to a connection with LA 3090 and existing LA 1 at the southern terminus.

Line C was presented to provide an opportunity for a comparative evaluation between Line A and a longer route that more closely follows existing LA 1. Line C (similar to Line A) would cross three navigable waterways, Bollinger Canal, Boudreaux Canal and Bayou Lafourche.

As a result of comprehensive involvement by the public, local officials, and resource agencies, sufficient information and public opinion existed to identify Line A as the Preferred Alignment in the DEIS prepared for the LA 1 Improvements project.

Line A (Preferred and Selected Alignment) would have the least involvement with wetlands and prehistoric archaeological high probability areas and would not have the greatest impact in any resource category.

Line A satisfies, to the fullest extent possible, the objectives of the merged NEPA/Section 404 process that was adopted for this study. The project approach allowed a thorough consideration of all alternatives developed with respect to potential impacts waters of the United States, including wetlands and functioned as the Alternatives Analysis. Wetland impacts were minimized. The Selected Alignment, Line A, has the least amount of direct wetland impacts and is the environmentally preferred alignment as supported and documented in the FEIS. In addition, as also documented in the FEIS, Line A fully satisfies the purpose and need for the project.

C. Section 4(f)

No known Section 4(f) resources would be affected by any of the three alignments of the Build Alternative, including the Selected Alignment, Line A. Per agreement with the State Historic Preservation Officer, a detailed terrestrial and underwater (magnetometer) cultural resource survey will be conducted within the Selected Alignment once project R/W has been acquired. All archaeological sites that warrant preservation in place will be avoided, provided that a prudent and feasible alternative for highway construction can be identified. This agreement is in the Appendix of the FEIS.

D. Measures to Minimize Harm

All practicable measures to minimize environmental harm have been incorporated into the decision.

In accordance with 23 USC 144(h) , (23 CFR Section 650.805), the DOTD and FHWA have made a preliminary determination that U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) bridge permits are only required for portions of the project spanning the Boudreaux Canal, the Bollinger Canal, Bayou Lafourche and the Southwestern Louisiana Canal. Because much of the proposed highway will be located over marsh and open water, there will be continued coordination with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to verify that no other navigable waterways will be affected. A final joint determination of the locations requiring a bridge permit will be made with the USCG during preliminary design. For all navigable waterways vertical and horizontal navigation clearances will have to be confirmed/determined during final design at each location.

The DOTD will coordinate with the USCG to provide information relative to navigation and the effects the bridges will have on navigation interests using the waterways. Location of bridge piers, the horizontal clearance provided, the vertical clearance, the proximity of any existing bridges, fendering or collision design alternatives and

alignment of the navigational openings will be coordinated with the USCG during final design.

From the beginning of project conceptualization there has been a commitment by FHWA and the DOTD that the project would be built using “end on” construction to minimize disturbance to Essential Fish Habitat and marsh vegetation, except for the fixed-span high-level bridges and their approaches, which cannot be constructed using “end on” construction due to the roadway grade and structure height. Conventional construction techniques would be used instead at this location. Temporary construction barges used as a mat across the marsh areas, temporary low-level bridges constructed using “end-on” construction, and temporary haul roads could be utilized. Barges would also be used in existing navigable channels for construction and for delivery of materials. Construction canal dredging could be used, but was identified by the resource agencies as the least desirable construction method due to residual resource impacts. New canals through the marsh vegetation would not be created. Dredging would be limited to those locations where the ramps and connector roads transition from being on structure to being on fill at their connections with LA 3235, LA 1 or LA 3090. Fill material for the haul roads would be obtained from outside the study area. Adequate access to the work area and the avoidance of known archaeological sites at Leeville may dictate the construction methods and their location.

Temporary construction impacts to wetlands would be minimized to the extent possible and appropriate mitigation provided, including pre- and post-construction monitoring. Temporary construction barges and low-level bridges and their piles would be removed and the wetlands restored. Temporary haul roads would be lowered to marsh elevation and vegetation planted. Construction canals would be filled to pre-construction elevations. Any filter cloth used during construction would remain in place after construction. All unavoidable wetland impacts will be mitigated for by the DOTD and the FHWA. FHWA and DOTD will coordinate mitigation requirements with the Corps of Engineers, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and other state and federal resource agencies, as appropriate. The DOTD will attempt to further minimize wetland impacts in the final design phase of the project when practicable. Final mitigation ratios and requirements for direct and secondary wetland impacts will be finalized as plans are developed.

Due to the importance of smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alternifolia*), the dominant coastal wetland plant in the study area, a study was conducted to determine the secondary wetland impacts due to the shading effect of an elevated structure. FHWA, DOTD, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Corps of Engineers agreed that required mitigation would be determined by adding the acreage of direct wetlands impacts to the acreage of marsh that would be shaded for 4 hours or greater, which would allow up-front mitigation through 1:1 marsh creation. This would allow mitigation to be in place prior to construction and prior to the vegetated wetland impacts. The requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and implementing rules with respect to avoiding, mitigating, or offsetting the project’s impact on Essential Fish Habitat will be satisfied upon the creation of replacement marsh habitat.

The entire study area lies within the 100-year flood plain. Detailed hydraulic studies will be performed during the final design phase of the project to determine any changes in flood elevations due to construction. The Selected Alignment includes all practicable measures to minimize floodplain impacts. A detailed floodplain evaluation will be conducted during the final design phase of the project in accordance with Executive Order 11988 and 23 CFR 650, Subpart A.

A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared in conjunction with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting process prior to construction. The DOTD will minimize non-point discharge water quality impacts and will comply with all requirements of the Clean Water Act, as amended, for the construction of this proposed highway, and will include all specifications and best management practices (BMPs) necessary for control of erosion and sedimentation due to construction related activities.

During final design, the DOTD will review the current Lafourche Parish hazardous spill contingency plan with the Lafourche Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness (LPOEP) and coordinate with the LPOEP to revise the plan, as appropriate, based on the proposed highway's operation.

Scupper discharge pipes on the entire of the elevated highway will include additional length so as to not preclude the attachment of a highway runoff collection system, should future research indicate the need for such a system.

The FHWA, DOTD and the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) have reached a consensus for the completion of the Section 106 process with respect to the project's effects on cultural resources. Terrestrial and underwater (magnetometer) archaeological and historic structure surveys will be conducted within the Selected Alignment once project R/W has been acquired per agreement with the SHPO. This agreement is provided in the Appendix of the FEIS. Further agreements will be developed between the DOTD, FHWA, and the SHPO should the findings warrant such action. All archaeological sites that warrant preservation in place will be avoided, provided that a prudent and feasible alternative for highway construction can be identified.

Currently, there are no reasonable or feasible noise abatement measures that would eliminate or reduce the expected highway traffic noise impact at identified receptors. During final design, the DOTD will consider the incorporation of design elements or the use of materials that may assist in reducing noise impacts at the identified receptors. Existing research has not documented the effectiveness of either certain design elements or materials as being identifiably effective in reducing noise impacts.

Lafourche Parish was designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an O₃ attainment area with limited maintenance plan requirements, effective February 25, 2002. The EPA made a conformity determination and ruled that the Parish complies with

all conformity provisions of the State Implementation Plan. Overall, there is no expected change to the area's travel demand volumes other than some minor recirculation. Therefore, there would not be any subsequent changes to the regional air quality emissions burden.

There are no Federally-listed, threatened, endangered, or candidate species within the proposed highway corridor. No further consultation with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is required unless there are changes in the scope or location of the project, or project construction has not been initiated within one year. If the project is not initiated within one year, follow-up consultation should be conducted with the FWS's Ecological Service's Office in Lafayette, Louisiana, prior to making expenditures for construction.

A survey will be conducted during the nesting season prior to construction, to determine the presence of any waterbird nesting colonies within 1,500 feet of the construction activities.

A pullover site will be incorporated into the proposed action for bird watching or other scenic viewing activities. The location and design features will be determined during final design.

Line A impacts the least number of producing oil/gas wells (one). In conjunction with the property acquisition process, a qualified petroleum engineer would conduct a feasibility study for each impacted well to determine the estimated reserves. Results of the study would determine whether a well would be replaced by directional drilling or compensation would be provided to landowners based on estimated reserves. Adjustments to the pile locations during final design may further minimize or entirely avoid oil and gas impacts. Access to the area oil and gas well areas should not be precluded because the base of girder of the elevated highway would be a minimum of 13 feet above the water.

A Phase I Site Assessment was conducted on the upland areas of the alignments. During final design, the DOTD will conduct additional studies, as warranted, to further determine the specific location of potential hazardous materials sites along the Selected Alignment, Line A. A complete site assessment will be conducted. If areas of contamination are present, appropriate measures will be taken to remediate the area prior to construction.

LA 1, LA 3235 and LA 3090 will remain open to through and local traffic during construction.

The location of crossover structures for emergency access will be determined during final design.

The DOTD will provide relocation assistance to residences and businesses displaced during acquisition of right-of way in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation

Assistance and Real Property Policies Act of 1970. The DOTD is committed to assist with locating replacement housing within the occupant's financial means and within the general area of the project and when necessary providing housing of last resort. Real estate availability will be reassessed once final design of the highway has been completed.

Contractors will be required to observe and comply with all federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations that affect the conduct of the construction work. The DOTD and its contractors will not excavate, fill, or perform land clearing activities within the Waters of the United States or any areas under the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers, except as authorized by the Corps. In addition, standard procedures that contained in DOTD's *Standard Specifications of Roads and Bridges* that pertain to environmental protection would be followed.

If the project is funded as a toll facility, additional environmental studies would be performed and appropriate mitigation provided for impacts associated with a toll plaza.

E. Monitoring or Enforcement Program

Terrestrial and underwater (magnetometer) archaeological and historic structure surveys will be conducted within the Selected Alignment once project R/W has been acquired per agreement with the SHPO. This agreement is provided in the Appendix of the FEIS. Further agreements will be developed between the DOTD, FHWA, and the SHPO should the findings warrant such action.

Temporary construction impacts to wetlands would be minimized to the extent possible and appropriate mitigation provided, including pre- and post-construction monitoring. Temporary construction barges and low-level bridges and their piles would be removed and the wetlands restored. Temporary haul roads would be lowered to marsh elevation and vegetation planted. Construction canals would be filled to pre-construction elevations. FHWA and DOTD will coordinate mitigation requirements with the Corps of Engineers, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and other state and federal resource agencies, as appropriate.

The mitigation commitments will be tracked by DOTD throughout the design and construction of the project. DOTD is currently working on a Project Management System and it is expected that this tracking will be incorporated into this or a similar system.

F. Comments on Final EIS

The FEIS was approved for distribution on September 9, 2002. It was furnished to agencies and individuals who made substantive comments on the DEIS. The Notice of Availability of the FEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on October 11, 2002, and comments were requested by November 20, 2002, the end of the wait period. Comments received by this date are summarized below, each followed by a specific response. Copies of the letters received are attached as Appendix A to this Record of Decision.

State of Louisiana, Department of Environmental Quality

No objections based on the FEIS, however, "Any approval, or letter of no objection, granted by LDEQ is relevant only to the granting of funds for the proposed project. This does not relieve the applicant of his responsibility for obtaining any other permits or approvals necessary from LDEQ or other State, Local, or Federal agencies, nor does it influence the Department's ultimate decision on those permits or approvals." Affirmed that Lafourche Parish is classified as an attainment parish with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for all criteria air pollutants. Noted that a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be required, along with a Water Quality Certification, and a stormwater general permit from LADEQ. Stated that all precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities.

Comments noted. See FEIS for information regarding required permits and precautions regarding construction activities.

Marion R. Bowman, P.E., Joseph D. Fail Engineering Company, Inc.

Available right of way along existing LA 1 is extremely limited to those seeking to install utilities underground, including water, gas, electric and communications. Provision of an elevated highway may make this more difficult if the existing highway is not maintained. It would be good if the design of the elevated would make conduit available to pull these facilities through. Having an elevated highway would allow much less restricted travel up and down the bayou.

DOTD through our permitting process makes our right of way available for utility location if possible and appropriate. At this time we do not intend to accommodate utilities on elevated sections of LA 1. Utility companies may choose to utilize easements and corridors provided through other sources.

Claude DeFelice, DeFelice Electrical, Heating & A/C, Inc.

In order to meet the continued growth and demands of this area, a four lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon would be very beneficial, not only to this area but also nation wide.

Comment noted.

James Leonard, M. D., a Medical Corporation

There is an urgent need for an elevated highway connecting Golden Meadow and Port Fourchon. The connection between Golden Meadow and Port Fourchon provides a vital evacuation route. As important, or more so, is the vital link that LA 1 provides for the oil industry and our national security.

Comment noted.

Bobby Barthel, South Central Industrial Association

As an organization, the South Central Industrial Association supports the work in progress towards advancement of this major artery and requests that the project be implemented to its next level of preparedness.

Comment noted.

Patrick Pitre, Ocean Marine Operators, LLC

The proposed project would help the economy of the southern parishes of Louisiana and the nation as a whole, as well as provide a hurricane evacuation route. Ocean Marine Operators, its employees and its owners, totally support a new 4-lane elevated highway from south Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon, the largest deep water port for the oil and gas industry.

Comment noted.

Ruby D. Cheramie, Cajunland Fishing Charter

Gus Cheramie, Cajunland Fishing Charter

Iris Doucet, Doucet & Adams, Inc.

Cory Kief, Doucet & Adams, Inc.

Carrie Boudreaux, Doucet & Adams, Inc.

It is imperative that a four-lane elevated highway be built from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. The whole economy of the area depends on Port Fourchon and being able to get to it by land. Highway 1 south of Golden Meadow is in grave danger of becoming impassable. This would be disastrous to the companies that operate there, the people who work there, the State of Louisiana and to the United States. A four-lane elevated highway is the most sensible solution to the problem and a necessity.

Comment noted.

Susan Matherne

The four-lane highway elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon will be a great asset to Lafourche Parish. Transportation will be greatly improved and the highway will benefit the community with a vast environmental impact.

Comment noted.

Emily T. D'Arcangelo

Wholeheartedly supports the building of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. The highway will have immense environmental impact on our area and will add to the betterment of our community.

Comment noted.

Cullen Curole, Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation

The Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary is one of the most productive estuaries in the world, providing the nation with an abundance of seafood, recreation and energy. Much of the value recognized in the estuary comes from our need and ability to harvest, to gather, to utilize and enjoy these resources. Access is necessary if we are to maximize the use and enjoyment of these resources. I only hope that we tread carefully across these threatened

wetlands. I have faith and confidence that the proponents of the proposed LA 1 improvements have considered all possible solutions to providing the safest, and most environmentally compatible road system connecting Port Fourchon, Leeville, and Grand Isle to the rest of the nation. With this, I offer my support for the construction of the four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Roy Francis, LA 1 Coalition

The LA 1 Coalition is a community driven non-profit organization that has one mission-road improvement from Grand Isle to U.S. 90. On behalf of the Coalition offers support for the improvements to LA 1 as defined in the FEIS. (Fact sheet attached.)

Comment noted.

Leon E. Breaux, Jr., Leon E. Breaux, III, Elizabeth A. Breaux, Breaux Petroleum Products, Inc.

We support a four-lane elevated highway system from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. Our area is suffering with substandard highway that cannot possibly handle the level of activity from the oil and gas industry. We see the need for improvement on a daily basis with our trucks delivering fuel to businesses in lower Lafourche and Grand Isle. An elevated highway is needed to support increasing traffic and provide hurricane evacuation. Areas of the existing roadway go under water in times of heavy rainfall, which eliminates any means of getting in or out of the affected areas.

Comment noted.

Lane M. Cheramie, Lady of the Sea General Hospital

Lady of the Sea General Hospital supports the building of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. With the present two-lane highway, it is difficult to get the injured to the hospital in a timely fashion. The construction of a four-lane elevated highway would also help the area's economy and a strong economy assists in recruitment of necessary medical professionals.

Comment noted.

Unidentified letter

Something needs to be done about traffic and flooding problems on LA 1. A major truck accident could close the road for days. When Leeville floods or the bridge breaks down, no one gets in or out.

Comment noted.

Andy & Sue Galliano

Letter is to advise of full support to build an elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. This roadway will insure safety and support economic progress.

Comment noted.

Wil Morvant, National Sales Corp.

As a company doing business in the Lafourche area for 20 years, it is evident an elevated four-lane highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon is imperative to continue to realize the potential of the Fourchon area and facilities.

Comment noted.

Minor Cheramie, Jr., L & M BoTruc Rental, Inc.

The proposed project would help the economy of the southern parishes of Louisiana and the nation as a whole, as well as provide a hurricane evacuation route. L & M, its employees and its owners, totally support a new 4-lane elevated highway from south Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon, the largest deep water port for the oil and gas industry.

Minor Cheramie III, BoTruc Enterprises, Inc.

The proposed project would help the economy of the southern parishes of Louisiana and the nation as a whole, as well as provide a hurricane evacuation route. BoTruc Enterprises, its employees and its owners, totally support a new 4-lane elevated highway from south Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon, the largest deep water port for the oil and gas industry.

Comment noted.

Kevin J. Gaubert, Gaubert Oil Company, Inc.

Gaubert Oil Company, Inc. is a petroleum distribution employing 105 people at ten locations in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. We urge your favorable approval of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon, Louisiana.

Comment noted.

Donnell Zeringue

Highly supports the building of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. The highway will be a great asset and will have an enormous environmental impact to our community.

Comment noted.

Loulan Pitre, Jr., State of Louisiana, Representative, District 54

Letter to communicate strongest level of support for construction of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon, as well as support for the preferred alternative route as set forth in the FEIS. This highway would be the key component in maintaining appropriate access to Port Fourchon, which is critical to the nation's supply of energy. The construction of this project has the strongest level of support among constituents and is not aware of any constituent who is opposed to this project.

Comment noted.

Michael H. Martin, Assessor Lafourche Parish

For more than seventy years LA 1 has been a vital link to the infrastructure of our a state. From transporting our citizens and tourists, to moving our seafood, the roadway plays a significant role to Louisiana as well as our nation's economy. It provides the only route for the gas and petroleum industry's access to nationally significant Port Fourchon, Grand Isle and the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP). Port Fourchon and the related businesses and watercraft supply more than 40% of Lafourche Parish's tax base. LA 1 is one of the our country's most important highways. To complicate matters, the effects of coastal erosion has caused LA 1 to become increasingly susceptible to flooding even during minor adverse weather conditions. This creates a safety hazard to the only evacuation route from Golden Meadow to Grand Isle. Is in full support of building a four lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Guy P. Zeringue, M.D., F.A.C.S., Southern E.N.T. Associates, Inc.

Letter to encourage approval of the four lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. The Port is important part of Louisiana's economy. Highway access is inadequate contributing to highway fatalities and making business transportation inefficient.

Comment noted.

Miki Savoie, Lafourche Ambulance District #1

Lafourche Ambulance District #1 is in full support of building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Warren & Shirley Authment

Strongly recommends a four-lane highway between Raceland and Fourchon and resurfacing the road between Raceland and Fourchon, especially the road between Larose & Golden Meadow (four-lane). Recommends a new four-lane bridge in Leeville.

Comment noted. The proposed action is from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon and does not include areas north of Golden Meadow.

Richard G. Weimer, Richard Weimer Architect, A.I.A., L.L.C.

Strongly supports the building of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon due to vast number of transport trucks, many visitors to Grand Isle, and the need for a safe hurricane evacuation route. An elevated highway will have negligible long term impacts to the wetlands.

Comment noted.

Carl E. Heck, Carl Heck Engineers, Inc.

Writing letter in support of building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Janet F. Lococo

Writing letter in support of building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon. Fragile LA 1 is the only land route to Port Fourchon which plays a critical role in the nation's oil and gas production. Without LA 1, access for equipment and support personnel for the oil and gas platforms would be severely hampered. Were LA 1 to be rendered unserviceable due to high water, even for just a few days, this nation's energy supply would be crippled. We must maintain the critical infrastructure that supports domestic energy production. Failure to address LA 1 will cause us to experience an energy crisis of disastrous proportions.

Comment noted.

Lorraine C. Reeves, Mid-South Erosion Control Systems, Inc.

Sending letter in support of building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Sharon St. Pierre, South Lafourche Bank & Trust Company

South Lafourche Bank is a local bank with all its offices in the 10th ward. The proposed elevated highway would be a tremendous boon to our local economy as well as that of the port. It would make travel to Grand Isle, Leeville, and Fourchon easy and efficient. Our present infrastructure can no longer handle its heavy traffic load. The highway would also guarantee safe and swift evacuations in times of hurricanes. South Lafourche Bank fully supports the proposed four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Foruchon.

Comment noted.

Roy T. Sternfels, CIC, Sternfels Insurance Agency, Inc.

Intends letter to show support of building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Crosby Tugs, LLC (unsigned)

Agrees with a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. Feels this will highly improve transportation for our company as well as others.

Comment noted.

Richard Gremillion, Inland Lift Boats, Inc.

Fully supports building a four-lane highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon and thinks this is the best solution. An elevated highway will keep the motorist out of high water and will make driving safer. The connection to the Port is important to Louisiana and the U.S.

Comment noted.

Susan M. Gisclair, G & A Auger Co., Inc.

Proposed elevated highway will help to support continued progress and also ensure better and safer roads for travel. Project has been sorely needed.

Comment noted.

Steven Gremillion, Gremillion Marine, L.L.C.

Fully supports the building of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. As a businessman and resident of Lafourche, sees first hand the need for a better solution for travel from Golden Meadow to the Port. An elevated highway would tackle the problems of high water and erosion with the present roadway.

Comment noted.

Ernie Gremillion, G & A Auger Co., Inc.

Often travels from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon and has often had to travel through water on the road in bad weather and finds it unsafe. Construction of an elevated roadway is a better solution to the road problems which we face now and will face in the near future. Louisiana and the U. S. will only benefit from improved roads and making travel to and from the Port safer and sounder.

Comment noted.

Ernest J. Gremillion, G & A Barge Rentals& Construction Company, Inc./ G & A Auger Co., Inc.

As a local businessman and longtime resident in Lafourche Parish I know first hand how important it is to our economy and success to make importing and exporting as easy and safe as possible. An elevated LA 1 will help insure safety and efficiency, especially during high tides and storm surges.

Comment noted.

Louis Griffin, Friends of the Center

The Friends of the Center is a non-profit organization in the South Lafourche area whose mission is to improve the quality of life for special citizens through social and athletic activity. I am writing to you in support of building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. It will not be long before the Gulf of Mexico affects the stability and structure of LA 1 and land south of Golden Meadow. We must act quickly for our future and that of Louisiana and the country.

Comment noted.

Donald J. Avo, Nicholls State University

It is imperative that we have a four-lane highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon. LA 1 is the only means of land access to Port Fourchon, which services between 15% and 18% of the domestic oil and gas production. The Persian Gulf region supplies 23% of the U.S. oil needs. LA 1 is the only means of land access to Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP), which handles 13% of the U. S. imported crude oil and is now servicing OCS. LOOP's pipelines are connected to 35% of the U.S. refinery capacity. All precautions and resources are needed to maintain this highway access to this energy

supply. LA 1 is the only means of access for oil spill response for Port Fourchon and LOOP, the only means of land access to Louisiana's only inhabited barrier island - Grand Isle, the boundary between the nation's two most productive estuaries- the Barataria and the Terrebonne, and the only means of evacuation for thousands.

Comment noted.

J. Thomas Hassell, CLU, ChFC, J. Thomas Hassell & Co., Inc.

Letter is to inform of support for the building of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

John J. Plaisance, II, P.E., L.S., J. Wayne Plaisance, Inc.

Expresses support of the proposed elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. Much of the local economy and his business depends on a safe, dependable highway to Fourchon. LA 1 has been recently closed by an ammonia leak as well as tropical storms Isidore and Lili.

Comment noted.

Richard Champagne, Mayor of Town of Lockport

As a resident of Lafourche Parish for seventy years has seen a tremendous increase in traffic on this fragile two-lane highway system. This road is the only means of land access to Port Fourchon, which now services a sizeable percentage of the United State's energy supply. LA 1 is also the hurricane evacuation route for thousands yet it is often impassable due to floodwaters or traffic accidents. Improvements to this highway are critical to this parish, this state and this nation.

Comment noted.

Marco J. Picciola, II, P.E., L.S., Picciola & Associates, Inc.

Firm is in support of the proposed improvements to LA 1 from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Henry J. Lafont, Jr. Attorney at Law

Supports building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

James J. Buquet III, Buquet Distributing Company, Inc.

Supports the proposed elevated four-lane highway from Golden Meadow south to Port Fourchon. While an expensive undertaking, the economic benefits to Louisiana, our Gulf Coast and the entire United States will far outweigh the costs involved. Time is of the essence.

Comment noted.

Jac Culver, Coastal Amphibious Services, Inc.

Supports the building of a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. Supporting this roadway will help to support the quality of life of those individuals located south of Golden Meadow. This addition will provide for future economic development as well providing a more substantial hurricane evacuation route. Company currently utilizes LA 1 and recognizes that it is undergoing constant erosion and wear and tear from the excessively heavy traffic that supports our oil and gas exploration infrastructure.

Comment noted.

Dan Duplantis, Raceland Raw Sugar Corporation

Supports building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. Project would provide an economic impact for the good of our community as well as the state of Louisiana.

Comment noted.

Sidney Triche, Agent, New York Life Insurance Company

Full support for building a four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon.

Comment noted.

Wayne J. Pharo, M.D., F.A.C.C., F.A.C.P, F.A.C.A., F.S.C.A.I., Heart Center of Lafourche

Supports building four-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon. This project is necessary for safety reasons and evacuation purposes.

Comment noted.

E. Conclusion and Approval

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approves the selection of the **Build Alternative**, alignment **Line A**, in agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and in cooperation with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The selection of the Build Alternative, alignment Line A is made following a collaborative decision-making process that included a thorough consideration of all identified social, economic and environmental factors with extensive resource agency coordination and public involvement.

1/29/03

Date

Original signed by
William A. Sussmann

William A. Sussmann
Louisiana Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration