



17 J M TATUM INDUSTRIAL DRIVE SUITE 120
HATTIESBURG, MS 39401

(601) 318-1215

PAT HARRISON WATERWAY DISTRICT

April 10, 2024

Congressman Michael Guest
450 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

RE: **1st Priority-** FY 25 Community Project Request-Emergency Archusa Creek Dam Replacement-
\$5.5 M, THUD, HUD, EDI

Dear Congressman Guest:

We greatly appreciate your prompt and continuing assistance to help to identify federal technical and financial assistance available for the Pat Harrison Waterway District (PHWD) in response to the Archusa Creek Dam's failure on July 16, 2023. Your staff was very helpful as we engaged federal, state, and local officials and agencies to explore all potential sources of technical and financial assistance to get the dam fixed, and fixed right.

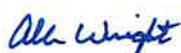
Archusa Creek Dam is a low hazard, recreational dam built in 1971 with funding from the Dept. of the Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation with Land and Water Conservation Act (L&WCF) funding. The PHWD operates and maintains the dam and the 450-acre lake with the Archusa Creek Water Park. The dam first failed in January 1998 and cost \$1,300,000 to repair/modify. Twenty-five years later, the dam failed again forcing the PHWD to close the Water Park. The revenue lost from tourism and recreational spending at the Water Park had an immediate detrimental economic impact on rural Clarke County, the City of Quitman, and the PHWD. As we approach the anniversary of the dam failure, its economic impacts are escalating into a full-blown regional economic disaster.

As a recreational dam originally built by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, neither the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) nor the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has authority to fund dam repairs. We asked the Mississippi Legislature for funds on July 24, 2023 and they requested we ask the COE to; 1) conduct an independent dam assessment, and 2) provide a cost estimate to repair/modify the dam. Accordingly, we teamed up with both the City of Quitman and the Clarke County Board of Supervisors as co-applicants for a 100% federally funded COE Planning Assistance to the States project. On March 5, 2024, the COE provided a preliminary report (including 15% design) with a cost estimate of \$17,549,114 to repair/modify the dam to ensure its long-term integrity. We are keeping the Legislature and your staff updated on the COE's efforts and sincerely believe the Legislature will provide some funding during their 2024 Regular Session to begin the dam repairs.

At the federal level, Archusa Creek Dam is essentially an orphaned dam. So, after discussions with your staff and carefully reviewing the FY24 Community Funded Project Guidance, **we request a \$5.5 M Community Funded Project through the THUD/HUD/EDI account to immediately start repairing/modifying the dam as the COE has recommended.** We are also requesting programmatic language to encourage the Secretary of the Interior to reach out to the COE and Secretary of Agriculture to identify legal authorities which will allow the COE and/or NRCS to provide technical and financial assistance to the Archusa Creek Dam recovery under existing programs.

We desperately need federal and state assistance as quickly as possible to repair/modify Archusa Creek Dam and get Archusa Creek Water Park open and running to remedy this ongoing economic disaster.

Sincerely,


Allen Wright
Executive Director

CLARKE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

100 EAST CHURCH STREET • P.O. BOX 616
QUITMAN, MS 39355
(601) 776-5873 • (601) 776-1013 FAX

DARRICK MARSHALL
District 1

LORENZO CARTER
District 2

JOEL SPEED
District 3



PAUL MOSLEY
District 4

SCOTT EVANS
District 5

LISA HARRIS
County Administrator

April 1, 2024

Mr. Don Pittman, President
Pat Harrison Waterway District
6081 Highway 49 South
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

RE: Letter of Support-Emergency Archusa Dam Replacement-\$17,549,114 FY 25 Dept of Interior Community Project Request

Dear Mr. Pittman:

We greatly appreciated the Pat Harrison Waterway District's (PHWD) leadership after the July 16, 2023 failure of the Archusa dam. The dam failure and loss of tourism and recreational spending from the Archusa Water Park's closure have had a major negative economic impact on Clarke County businesses and diminished our family friendly, outdoor recreational opportunities. You quickly coordinated with federal, state, and local officials to explore all possible opportunities to obtain technical and financial assistance to get the dam fixed and fixed right.

We were happy to join with the City of Quitman and the PHWD as a co-applicant of the 100% federally funded U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (COE) Planning Assistance to the States (PAS) project. It is great that the COE was able to provide an independent, unbiased recommendation on what needs to be done to repair/replace the dam and provide a 3rd party cost estimate for that work. Your leadership and persistence were critical to get the project started quickly and for the COE to provide us with a preliminary report and cost estimate by January 31, 2024.

Initially, the COE estimated the project would cost \$12,239,425. However, after meeting with all applicants, the COE revised the estimate to \$17,549,114 on March 5, 2024. This increase included \$1,221,525 for road repairs, \$842,267 as a 7% design fee, \$471,133 as a 3.5% construction engineering fee, and \$2,774,764 for fish restocking. We continue to rely on your guidance and support your efforts to secure funding to ensure that Archusa dam is safe and will remain safe well into the future. Please know that we continue to support your efforts with the Congressional Delegation and the Mississippi Legislature to secure the funding necessary for this critical project as quickly as possible.

We support the PHWD in submitting a \$17,549,114 FY 2025 Congressional Community Funded Project request to our Congressional Delegation through the Dept. of Interior or other appropriate appropriations bills. We need federal and state assistance as quickly as possible to modify Archusa Dam and get Archusa Creek Water Park open to remedy this ongoing economic disaster.

Sincerely


Darrick Marshall

President, Clarke County, Mississippi, Board of Supervisors

Lorenzo Carter, District 2 Supervisor

Joel Speed, District 3 Supervisor

Paul Mosley, District 4 Supervisor

Scott Evans, District 5 Supervisor

STEVE WATKINS, MAYOR
NAOMI SHEPHERD, CITY CLERK



ALDERMAN:
JOE BROOKS, WARD 1
BRIDGETT M. PETERS, WARD 2
RONALD HOLLOWAY, WARD 3
STEVE NEELY, WARD 4
HARRY WHEAT III, AT-LARGE

March 18, 2024

Mr. Don Pittman, President
Pat Harrison Waterway District
6081 Highway 49 South
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

RE: Letter of Support-Emergency Archusa Dam Replacement-\$17,549,114 FY 25 Dept of
Interior Community Project Request

Dear Mr. Pittman:

We greatly appreciated the Pat Harrison Waterway District's (PHWD) leadership after the July 16, 2023 failure of the Archusa dam. The dam failure and loss of tourism and recreational spending from the Archusa Water Park's closure have had a major negative economic impact on the City of Quitman's businesses and diminished our family friendly, outdoor recreational opportunities. On Aug. 1, 2023, we unanimously passed a Resolution Declaring a City Emergency because of the Archusa Creek Dam's failure. You recognized the magnitude of this disaster and quickly coordinated with federal, state, and local officials to explore all possible opportunities to obtain technical and financial assistance to get the dam fixed and fixed right.

We were happy to be the applicant, with the Clarke County Board of Supervisors and the PHWD supporting our efforts in obtaining the 100% federally funded U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (COE) Planning Assistance to the States (PAS) project. It is great that the COE was able to provide an independent, unbiased recommendation on what needs to be done to the dam and provide a 3rd party cost estimate for that work. Your leadership and persistence were critical to get the project started quickly and to get the COE to provide us with a preliminary report and cost estimate by January 31, 2024.

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Visit Our Website: www.cityquitman.net
POST OFFICE BOX 16 • 101 E. CHURCH STREET • QUITMAN, MISSISSIPPI 39355-0016
PHONE: 601.776.3728 • FAX: 601.776.4016
"A Great Place To Live, Work, and Play"

We support the PHWD in submitting a \$17,549,114 FY 2025 Congressional Community Funded Project request to our Congressional Delegation through the Dept. of Interior or other appropriate appropriations bills. We need federal and state assistance as quickly as possible to modify Archusa Dam and get the Archusa Creek Water Park open to remedy our ongoing City Economic Emergency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Watkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Watkins" clearly legible.

Mayor Steve Watkins