



PAT HARRISON WATERWAY DISTRICT

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Billy Jay
District-at-Large

Mike Smith
District-at-Large

March 17, 2025

Congressman Michael Guest
450 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: FY 26 Community Project Request-Emergency Archusa Creek Dam
Replacement-\$5.5 M, THUD, HUD, EDI

Dear Congressman Guest:

We greatly appreciate your efforts to include \$4,000,000 for the Archusa Dam in the House's FY 25 THUD appropriations bill and your continued assistance to identify and secure federal technical and financial assistance for the Pat Harrison Waterway District (PHWD) to respond to the Archusa Creek Dam's failure on July 16, 2023. We are continuing to work closely with the City of Quitman and the Clarke County Board of Supervisors and the Mississippi Legislature to secure funding to fix the dam and fix it right to avoid future failures. In the 2024 Regular Session, the Legislature provided \$2,000,000 for Archusa Dam (S. Bill #2468). This has allowed us to issue a Request for Proposals to engage an engineering firm to start work on the project.

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. You may recall that the PHWD cooperated with Clarke County and Quitman on COE Planning Assistance to the States report, Archusa Lake and Dam Assessment Technical Assistance Study (July 2024). In that Report, the COE estimated a total cost of \$17,549,114 for their recommended plan. This estimate included a 38% contingency fee to account for potential unexpected cost increases.

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 in FY 26 to continue 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 possibly

17 J M Tatum Industrial Drive Suite 120,
Hattiesburg, MS 39401



Telephone
601-318-1215

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financial assistance to the Archusa Creek Dam recovery under existing programs.

We desperately need federal 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,

Buck Buchanan,
President of the Board

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

March 17, 2025

Congressman Michael Guest
450 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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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 in FY 26 to

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LISA HARRIS
County Administrator

continue 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 possibly financial assistance to the Archusa Creek Dam recovery under existing programs. We desperately need federal 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lorenzo Carter", written over the printed name and title.

Lorenzo Carter,
President of the Board

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 17, 2025

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Visit Our Website: www.cityquitman.net

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We desperately need federal 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,



Steve Watkins, Mayor
City of Quitman, Mississippi