

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

---

Public Scoping Meeting  
Project History and Update  
In Re: Port of Gulfport Expansion Project  
Held at the Courtyard by Marriott,  
1600 East Beach Boulevard, Gulfport, Mississippi  
on, Tuesday, May 21, 2013,

---

**REPORTED BY:**

Melissa L. Burdine  
Simpson Burdine & Miguez  
Post Office Box 4134  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39535  
(228) 388-3130

1 MR. LITTEKEN:

2 Good evening. We're going to go ahead  
3 and get started with the formal presentation  
4 portion of our evening. I hope everybody had an  
5 opportunity to visit the displays around the room  
6 and speak with the folks with the project team,  
7 Corps of Engineers and Atkins and others.  
8 Hopefully you got some good information from that.  
9 But what I would like to do now is not only  
10 welcome you, but I would like to introduce a few  
11 folks to you on the project team.

12 I'm Craig Litteken. I'm with the Corps  
13 of Engineers in Mobile. And also with us is  
14 Munther Sahawneg, who's behind me, also with Corps  
15 of Engineers; Angela Bulger with Atkins, the  
16 primary consultant for doing the third-party EIS  
17 on this Port of Gulfport expansion project; Kim  
18 Fitzgibbons, she is our deputy project manager  
19 with Atkins for this project. And then you may  
20 have had an opportunity to meet others around the  
21 room with the Corps and Atkins.

22 And like I said, hopefully you got some  
23 good information. We're here this evening to  
24 collect comments. We want to hear from you on the  
25 Port of Gulfport Expansion Project. I acknowledge

1 and I had a conversation with many of you this  
2 evening about some of the projects going on in the  
3 Turkey Creek and Gulfport area, and we certainly  
4 want to acknowledge that those are going on. But  
5 tonight our focus is on the Port of Gulfport  
6 expansion, so we want to hear from you on that  
7 project.

8 We want to offer you opportunities,  
9 various ways to give us your comments. You can  
10 give to us your comments in writing. You can  
11 visit with our court reporter to deliver your  
12 comments and many of you have signed up to speak  
13 at the podium this evening to deliver your  
14 comments.

15 So with that, I just ask that everybody  
16 provide an opportunity for those that want to  
17 speak, to do so. If you haven't signed up to do  
18 that, you can go visit our entrance desk and get  
19 signed up and get put on that list to speak at the  
20 podium. So I'll ask that everybody be respectful  
21 and courteous, and we'll have a great productive  
22 evening.

23 And with that, I want to turn it over to  
24 Angela Bulger. She's going to give us a short  
25 presentation on where we're at with the expansion

1 project EIS.

2 MS. BULGER:

3 Well, good evening everyone. Can you  
4 hear me okay or do I need to raise this up? We're  
5 good. (Raising up microphone.) Is that better?

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER:

7 Yeah.

8 MS. BULGER:

9 Okay.

10 Well, I want to thank everybody first  
11 for coming tonight. I know it's a busy time of  
12 year, and we appreciate the fact that you took  
13 time out of your schedules to be here tonight with  
14 us and provide your comments on the project.

15 We also -- as Craig mentioned, we  
16 recognize there's a lot of projects going on in  
17 the community right now. And in my presentation,  
18 I will take just a very brief moment to address  
19 them and let you know how we're going to address  
20 those projects in the EIS for this widening  
21 project -- or I'm sorry -- for the expansion  
22 project.

23 I've been working on this Environmental  
24 Impact Statement project for about two years. And  
25 I'm starting to get a feel for your community here

1 and your concerns and your issues, and we  
2 understand what's going on. We know that the Port  
3 and others host public meetings periodically and  
4 many of you probably go to those meetings. And  
5 just as Craig said, we want to make sure that the  
6 focus tonight is on the expansion project because  
7 that's what we're here to get your comments on.

8 We are preparing an EIS, an  
9 Environmental Impact Statement for the Corps of  
10 Engineers. It's a document that looks at the  
11 potential impacts associated with this expansion  
12 project. And we're here tonight to make sure that  
13 we understand your concerns on the project, and  
14 then we take them into consideration when we're  
15 preparing the EIS. So please, as Craig said,  
16 let's focus on that project.

17 The other thing I just wanted to say,  
18 real quick, is that we know a lot of you are  
19 passionate about the project, and we just want to  
20 be sure that everybody has a chance to be heard  
21 tonight. So while I'm giving my presentation --  
22 and I do have a script that I'm going to read  
23 because I want to make sure I cover everything  
24 appropriately and get all the information out  
25 there -- I'm going to try real hard not to be

1 boring -- please do support me in that and let me  
2 finish.

3 And while others are commenting, please  
4 also just refrain, whether you agree with them 100  
5 percent or completely disagree with what they're  
6 saying. We've got a court reporter here to record  
7 the meeting tonight and she needs to be able to  
8 hear what's being said. So we just need to keep  
9 it quiet while others are talking.

10 What I'm going to do tonight in this  
11 presentation is just briefly discuss, as I said,  
12 some of the other projects going on in the area.  
13 I'm going to provide you with just a quick history  
14 of the proposed Port Expansion Project, go over  
15 what -- the changes that are being proposed in  
16 that project right now and why we're here tonight.  
17 And then, like I said, I have this script I'm  
18 going to read, so bear with me on that. Okay?

19 All right. First off, these other  
20 projects that are going on in the vicinity of the  
21 proposed expansion project, we know you're all  
22 aware of them and you're interested in them. And  
23 very quickly, let's run through how we're  
24 addressing each one of them.

25 There's the Port Restoration Project

1 that's going on right now, and we are going to, in  
2 the EIS, assume that that project is complete and  
3 functional as planned and it will be considered as  
4 part of the existing environment in our  
5 evaluation; the Kansas City Rail Improvements  
6 Project, which, I believe, is complete now, and,  
7 again, we will be considering that as part of our  
8 existing environment in the EIS. The Port's 33rd  
9 Street Project, which is conceptual right now, we  
10 are assuming that something will move forward with  
11 that project. And whatever that is, we will  
12 address it in the cumulative impact section of the  
13 Environmental Impact Statement.

14 The Mississippi Department of  
15 Transportation State Road 601 Project -- and some  
16 of you may refer to this as the Connector Road  
17 Project -- that project is on hold and, therefore,  
18 we will be looking at that in the cumulative  
19 impact's assessment of our EIS, as well. And the  
20 proposed Domain at Prime Center is a private  
21 development that the Corps received a permit  
22 application for. And it's currently being  
23 evaluated separately, but it will be considered in  
24 the cumulative impact section of our evaluation.

25 Now, let's run through a brief project

1 history of the proposed Port of Gulfport Expansion  
2 Project. The proposed expansion changed some  
3 since it was originally proposed. And we know it  
4 can be a little confusing, so hopefully I can  
5 clarify some of that tonight. The main purpose is  
6 to get your input tonight on the proposed  
7 expansion. But I'm -- so I'll do my best to keep  
8 this brief.

9 It's been part of the Port's long-term  
10 development, or Master Plan, to expand the Port  
11 facilities and capabilities to be more competitive  
12 in the Gulf market. In an effort to reach their  
13 goals of increased throughput, the Port came up  
14 with a preliminary design for an expanded facility  
15 and submitted an application to the U.S. Army  
16 Corps of Engineers in March of 2010 for the  
17 necessary permits needed to construct.

18 The Corps issued a public notice that  
19 the permit application had been received and  
20 requested comments from the public and state and  
21 federal agencies upon review of the permit  
22 application and is taking comments from the public  
23 and agencies into consideration. The Mobile  
24 district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
25 determined that the project could result in

1 significant impact to the human environment and  
2 that preparation of an Environmental Impact  
3 Statement under the National Environmental Policy  
4 Act, or NEPA, was necessary to determine the  
5 potential extent of that impact.

6 The project, as proposed in the permit  
7 application, was intended to increase throughput  
8 at the Port to up to four million, 20-foot  
9 equivalent units or TEUs, which is a full-size  
10 container that you see on semi-trucks. This  
11 originally proposed project would have impacted  
12 about 700 acres of water volume in the Mississippi  
13 Sound from dredging the expanded turning basin,  
14 filling areas to create upland and expand the Port  
15 footprint and other project features. That  
16 footprint is shown here in orange. (Demonstrating  
17 on slide.)

18 However, in response to public and  
19 agency comments, on the permit application notice  
20 and the changing economic markets, the Port  
21 decided to reduce the size of the proposed  
22 expansion impact area. The revised design would  
23 increase throughput at the Port to up to about two  
24 million TEUs and impact about 300 acres of water  
25 bottoms. The revised footprint is shown here in

1 purple. (Demonstrating on slide.)

2 It's quite a reduction and as -- you can  
3 see the difference on this slide. Just for  
4 clarification, the gray footprint here is the  
5 Restoration Project footprint, so you can see how  
6 the proposed expansion would build upon the  
7 completed Restoration Project.

8 In March 2011, the Corps filed a Notice  
9 of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact  
10 Statement. And to kick off the NEPA process, they  
11 hosted an agency workshop and a public scoping  
12 meeting to gather input from the community about  
13 the proposed expansion project. Many of you here  
14 tonight were probably at that meeting. The  
15 scoping comment period lasted for over 45 days and  
16 hundreds of comments were received during that  
17 time. All the comments were reviewed, tabulated  
18 and processed by the project team to make sure all  
19 issues raised about the Expansion Project were  
20 considered while preparing the EIS.

21 A scoping report was prepared that  
22 summarized the comments and identified areas where  
23 more information was needed to address particular  
24 issues that were raised during the scoping  
25 process. The scoping report is available on the

1 project website, and the web address for that site  
2 can be found on various materials we have here  
3 tonight. If you would like that address, you  
4 know, please ask any of us here on staff  
5 facilitating the meeting and we'll make sure you  
6 get it.

7 I want to stress that the comments  
8 received at the scoping meeting in 2011 and during  
9 the entire comment period were reviewed and  
10 considered in the evaluation of the project. Some  
11 of the people that read through them categorized  
12 them, identified the data needed to address them  
13 and figured where in the EIS the comment would be  
14 addressed and made sure all the comments that were  
15 considered are here in this room tonight, myself  
16 included. I realize that was two years ago and  
17 you all have still not seen evidence that your  
18 comments were taken seriously, but I assure you  
19 they were.

20 Hopefully, we will be able to get  
21 additional comments from you tonight on the  
22 proposed project changes. And when the draft EIS  
23 is published, you'll have a chance to take a look  
24 at it and see how we incorporated your concerns  
25 and took them into consideration in the EIS. One

1 thing you can see, as a result of comments  
2 received in 2011, is that we have done or are  
3 going to do some special studies to take a close  
4 look as some specific issues.

5           These special studies were done to help  
6 us understand the existing environment and the  
7 potential project-related impacts, based on input  
8 we received in 2011. The studies included  
9 analysis of the shipping market within the Gulf of  
10 Mexico, the United States and worldwide so we  
11 could determine what type of facility might be  
12 supported at Gulfport and what alternatives to the  
13 proposed Port Expansion we might need to consider.  
14 An economic study was also conducted to help us  
15 understand how different levels of throughput at  
16 the Port might affect the local economy.

17           A study of the bay bottom habitat in the  
18 project area was conducted so we could understand  
19 how the animals in the Mississippi Sound might be  
20 using the area that would be affected by the  
21 Expansion Project. We also initiated a tagging  
22 and monitoring program for Gulf sturgeon that  
23 began last summer and is ongoing. That study will  
24 continue for another year. And so we've learned  
25 that the area -- that the Gulf sturgeon is present

1 in the area, so we'll need to determine how these  
2 fish might be affected by the project.

3 We also initiated a study to determine  
4 how the proposed Port Expansion project might  
5 impact traffic. However, that study was started a  
6 few months ago and we had to put it on hold  
7 because of changes to the previously-mentioned  
8 State Road 601 Project that was put on hold.  
9 Right now, we're determining the appropriate  
10 future road conditions to study so we can evaluate  
11 Port Expansion Project traffic impact in a  
12 realistic manner, and we're working with the  
13 Mississippi Department of Transportation to do  
14 that.

15 Once we've completed that analysis,  
16 we'll use the projected traffic volumes and  
17 conditions to study the air emissions that occur  
18 as a result of the proposed Port Expansion. This  
19 will include truck, train, ship and employee  
20 traffic, as well as equipment used at the Port  
21 itself to process cargo. All of this information  
22 will feed into our evaluation, and we'll take  
23 community values into consideration when we assess  
24 how project-related impacts could affect Gulfport  
25 residents. This evaluation will also consider

1 potential disproportionate effects to low-income,  
2 minority communities, as well as the elderly and  
3 children.

4 As you can see, there's a lot to  
5 consider related to this project and we're doing  
6 our best to make sure that all the relevant  
7 information and all the relevant issues are taken  
8 into consideration and given proper review.

9 Last summer, our project team developed  
10 a set of alternatives that could be considered in  
11 the EIS. We had to determine exactly what we were  
12 going to consider before we could determine  
13 potential impacts to compare them. To keep the  
14 public informed, the Corps hosted a public  
15 workshop last August in Gulfport at the community  
16 center.

17 At that meeting, we presented  
18 information about the special studies I mentioned  
19 earlier, as well as the different alternatives  
20 that were being considered. I think some of you  
21 may have been at that meeting, too, and hopefully  
22 you found the information we presented helpful.

23 Tonight, I want to try to explain as  
24 much about the project as I can, so you can  
25 understand where we are in the evaluation process

1 and that we're here tonight to get your comments.

2 So the modified permit application,  
3 after the public workshop last summer, we  
4 continued with our special studies in developing  
5 the impact analysis and the EIS. However, in  
6 response to public concerns and in effort to  
7 ensure that the proposed Expansion Project would  
8 be as beneficial to the local economy as it can  
9 be, the Board decided to add modification of the  
10 existing Federal Navigation Channel to the  
11 Proposed Expansion project.

12 About a month ago, they submitted a  
13 modified permit application to the Corps for  
14 review. This was not a new permit application.  
15 It was a modification to the permit application  
16 that was submitted in 2010. The proposed changes  
17 were to deepen and possibly widen the navigation  
18 channel to allow for larger ships to enter the  
19 port. It's this proposed modification to the  
20 Expansion Project adding changes to the navigation  
21 channel that we're here to discuss tonight.

22 After the Corps received the permit  
23 application modification, they issued a public  
24 notice to let agencies and interested public know  
25 of the proposed project changes. A revised Notice

1 of Intent was also published in the Federal  
2 Register. And additionally, although, technically  
3 not required, the Corps decided to host this  
4 meeting tonight to provide you with this  
5 information about the project and offer another  
6 opportunity for agency and public comments on the  
7 proposed expansion project and the new changes to  
8 the permit application.

9 I want to point out that on this slide,  
10 you can see parts of the Federal Navigation  
11 Channel that are color-coded. It might be kind of  
12 hard to see. The purple part down here is  
13 referred to as the Bar Channel, and the green  
14 portion up here is referred to as the Sound  
15 Channel. (Demonstrating on slide.) And I just  
16 you want to point that out because the next slide,  
17 I'm going to refer to both the Bar and Sound  
18 Channels.

19 This slide shows you, in general, what  
20 the changes are to the Navigation Channel. What  
21 you're seeing here is a cross-section of the  
22 Navigation Channel, as if it were a tube and you  
23 cut a slice out of it and you were looking at the  
24 slice. The difference between the existing depth  
25 and the proposed depth is the space between the

1 gray bars, which represents the bottom of the  
2 channel. And then the dashed lines on the side  
3 represent the new channel side slopes. So the  
4 intent here is to show that even if the channel  
5 were not widened in depth, because it's going  
6 deeper, it would be a little bit wider at the top  
7 of the cut.

8 As you can see, the Port is proposing  
9 that in addition to the expanded port footprint  
10 and turning basin, the channel be dredged deeper.  
11 Specifically, right now, they're proposing the  
12 Sound Channel be deepened from 36 feet up to 47  
13 feet and that the Bar Channel be deepened from  
14 feet 38 to up to 49 feet. We're looking at  
15 various depths as part of this process and we'll  
16 identify the appropriate depths to be considered  
17 in the EIS. They're also considering widening the  
18 channel by up to about 100 feet to allow ships to  
19 navigate the turns in the channel easier.

20 Last month, we had ship simulations done  
21 by pilots that regularly navigate the channel.  
22 The simulations are computer-generated and are  
23 done almost like a video game on a really big  
24 screen, and you can modify the channel shape, as  
25 well as tides, currents and weather conditions.

1 That way, you can see how different sized ships  
2 can get through the channel and if tricky spots  
3 are made easier to navigate.

4 The results of these simulations are  
5 being processed now, and we'll use them to develop  
6 alternatives to consider in the EIS, which will be  
7 various combinations of port footprints and  
8 channel configurations. This slide is a little  
9 confusing, but I just wanted to walk through the  
10 process of where we are.

11 In short, the project was initiated in  
12 2010 when the Port submitted their permit  
13 application. The Corps' decision to prepare an  
14 EIS was announced, and the public comment period  
15 and public scoping meeting followed. That  
16 information was processed, considered, and an  
17 evaluation of alternatives, existing conditions  
18 and the need for special studies began.

19 Recently, the Port modified it's permit  
20 application by adding deepening and possibly  
21 widening the Federal Navigation Channel to their  
22 project. This initiated a second scoping period  
23 to collect public comment. We'll consider these  
24 comments in addition to those previously received  
25 and re-evaluate alternatives, update existing

1 conditions to include the channel footprint and  
2 complete the impact analysis and draft  
3 Environmental Impact statement.

4 The draft EIS will be published for  
5 public and agency review, and a public hearing  
6 will be held to gather your comments on the  
7 document. Following evaluation of comments, the  
8 Draft EIS will be revised, additional studies  
9 conducted, if needed, and the final EIS will be  
10 prepared. The final EIS will include comments  
11 received on the Draft EIS and responses to those  
12 comments.

13 The final EIS will then be published for  
14 public and agency review. Any comments on that  
15 final document will be addressed in the Record of  
16 Decision, which will document the Corps' decision  
17 regarding whether or not to approve the permit  
18 application for the proposed Port of Gulfport  
19 Expansion project. If it is approved, the permit  
20 will be issued and we expect the Draft EIS to be  
21 available in early 2014 for your review.

22 That concludes my presentation. I'll  
23 turn it back over to Mr. Litteken, and we can get  
24 started with the public comment period.

25 MR. LITTEKEN:

1           Okay. Thank you, Angela. We're going  
2 to go ahead and get started. When you came in,  
3 you had the opportunity to sign up to speak at the  
4 podium. If you haven't done that, please visit  
5 the entrance table and you can get signed up for  
6 that. We have a list of folks that will do that.  
7 So we'll call up federal, state and  
8 locally-elected officials first. Once we're done  
9 with that, then we'll move on to comments from  
10 others that are interested in delivering their  
11 comments at the podium.

12           When you come to the podium, please  
13 speak and spell your name so the court reporter  
14 has an opportunity to capture everything  
15 accurately. We want to make sure that we give  
16 you, as well as your comments, the opportunity to  
17 be noted and documented. So please, for accuracy  
18 of the record, speak and spell your name when you  
19 come up.

20           Each person will have four minutes. And  
21 what we'll do is, when you're 30 seconds out from  
22 your time, a yellow card will just give you the  
23 30-second warning. We'll let you know that you're  
24 about out of time. And then when your time is up,  
25 there will be a red card to let you know that your

1 time is up. So when you get to that point, we'd  
2 ask that you please take your seat and allow the  
3 others behind you to come up and have their due  
4 time at the podium to speak their comments.

5 And what we'll do is we'll call up one  
6 at a time, so then we'll call one person up and  
7 then we'll note who is next. And then we'll  
8 continue to go through that until the comments are  
9 completed. I, along with Munther, will be sitting  
10 at the table up here to receive your comments.

11 And let's see. A few grounds rules for  
12 the presentation -- or for the speaking at the  
13 podium, again, please be courteous to all speakers  
14 by not making comments during the presentation.  
15 All individuals have a right, equal right, to be  
16 heard, so no applause or shouting or other  
17 comments, so I ask that you please remain quiet  
18 and respectful to those that are speaking.

19 You may not defer your time to others.  
20 So when you're done with your time, please take  
21 your seat and don't worry about being done early.  
22 You don't have to use your full four minutes. If  
23 you have a printed copy of your comments, feel  
24 free to drop those comments by the entrance table  
25 and we'll make sure those comments are brought in

1 and considered as part of the record, as well as  
2 any other written comments you might have  
3 developed while you're here this evening. If  
4 you're not able to complete all of your comments  
5 during your four minutes at the podium, feel free  
6 to submit written comments at the end or also feel  
7 free to visit with our court reporter at the end  
8 as well so you can make sure all of your comments  
9 are captured, if that's the methods that you would  
10 like to choose.

11 Okay. We're in the scoping phase of the  
12 project, as we talked about, Angela has pointed  
13 out very clearly. And we do know that there's  
14 other projects going on in this area, but for this  
15 evening, we ask again that your comments focus on  
16 the Port of Gulfport Expansion Project.

17 For those that didn't have the  
18 opportunity or weren't wanting to speak at the  
19 podium, again, please feel free to visit the court  
20 reporter and drop your comments at the entrance.  
21 You can also submit your comments by mail or  
22 e-mail, and those addresses, I believe, are on the  
23 sign-in cards and also at the front desk so you  
24 can have the physical address, as well as the  
25 e-mail address.

1           So with that, we're going to go ahead  
2 and call our first speakers up. I believe we have  
3 one public official on the list. And when that  
4 person is finished with comments, then we'll move  
5 to all the others, as well. Maggie is going to  
6 call out the names to let the speakers know who's  
7 ready to come up.

8           Again, you have four minutes. And we  
9 have a timekeeper, so she'll let you know how  
10 you're doing on your time. With that, we have our  
11 first speaker.

12 MS. FITZGERALD:

13           Councilman Kenneth Casey, it is now your  
14 turn to make comments, and you can come right up  
15 here to the podium.

16 COUNCILMAN CASEY:

17           Good evening. I'm Kenneth L. "Truck"  
18 Casey, Sr. I'm the Ward 1 city councilman in  
19 Gulfport, and my concerns are always the same:  
20 Job creation on the port expansion. That's always  
21 a question that I have in all the meetings that I  
22 have attended here lately. That's pretty much all  
23 I have to say, is the job creation.

24           And during the dredging process of the  
25 channel, there won't be many jobs for the local

1 people. I gather that. But during the  
2 construction process on the expansion and on the  
3 elevation, we haven't had anybody to gain  
4 employment since that's been happening here in the  
5 communities of Gulfport. All right. Thank you.

6 MS. FITZGERALD:

7 Howard Page, it is now your turn to make  
8 your comments. John Sneed, you will be our  
9 speaker.

10 HOWARD PAGE:

11 Howard Page, H-o-w-a-r-d, P-a-g-e. I'm  
12 a community organizer for the Steps Coalition  
13 Partnership for -- Partners for a Safe and Healthy  
14 Port Campaign. One thing I would ask is -- this  
15 mike is a little uncomfortable to reach -- would  
16 you have -- one of your people be able to help  
17 anyone because I'm worried some folks are not  
18 going to be able to speak too easily into this?  
19 I'm already hearing some feedback.

20 But what I would like to most focus on  
21 is the fact that most of us are surprised to be  
22 here tonight. And one of the things I want to  
23 talk about is economics. We're surprised because  
24 we were always told that channel deepening is a  
25 part of the port project, and I think a lot of the

1 original comments reflect, you know, concerns  
2 about the effect of the channel deepening. A lot  
3 of the TEUs that were supposed to come in were  
4 based on a deeper channel.

5 So the reason I bring up that rather  
6 obvious fact -- I know most people in the room  
7 know that -- is I would like to ask, first of all,  
8 that the Port EIS have their economist look at the  
9 viability of the economics of this. I understand  
10 that this is proposed -- this expansion that this  
11 channel is going to serve is proposed to be a  
12 concession. The only concessionaire that I've  
13 heard mentioned ever is COSCO, the Chinese  
14 shipping company. There's only one company there  
15 because it's communist China. So that's the only  
16 possible concessionaire that we've had mentioned  
17 that's going to come and use this facility.

18 And what I would like to have is your  
19 economist look into the viability of this  
20 information as independently as possible. Because  
21 the reason I started out mentioning that most of  
22 us expected this channel deepening was in here is  
23 because, quite frankly, the Port has been very  
24 inaccurate with the information they've given.  
25 I'm not saying it's intentional, but I can

1 absolutely say that a lot of the information  
2 that's been put out has just not proven to be  
3 true. A lot of the things that people are  
4 trusting is going to create jobs has just not  
5 proven to be true.

6 And so I would hope that your economist  
7 makes an independent look at the facts of this  
8 possible investment of deepening a channel and  
9 this allowing a large expansion of this Port of  
10 200 acres, which as far as we know is going to be  
11 done to give, you know, the Chinese a -- or  
12 someone -- but the only candidate I'm aware of is  
13 the Chinese -- is to give them a place to operate  
14 here. Is it going to really give economic local  
15 benefits?

16 And one of the concerns I have is  
17 that -- an example I'll give you is there  
18 continues to be bad information put out. I went  
19 to the port's website today. I went to Facts  
20 About Revitalization. Facts About Revitalization  
21 tells us that at the end of restoration, the port  
22 will have a capacity for a million TEUs. Well, if  
23 you read the TranSystems report on the same  
24 website done by the Port, it says that the most  
25 TEUs you'll get without channel deepening is

1 480,000, less than half.

2 Just -- numbers are being based on this.  
3 Money is being spent on this. It's one of the  
4 reasons that we could very likely spend this 570  
5 million dollars on the present Port Project and  
6 not create jobs.

7 And, again, the reason I bring that  
8 up -- I know that's not what this exact thing is  
9 about -- is the veracity, the accuracy of  
10 information provided by the Port on economics and  
11 on the project itself. So I would ask that you  
12 look at this as independently and with as much  
13 scrutiny as possible, not just rely on information  
14 provided to you by the Port. Thank you.

15 So in my remaining time, after asking  
16 you to look at the economics very careful and  
17 very -- a lot of scrutiny, I would like you to  
18 look at environmental justice. Should this all  
19 come, you know, to the best end and we do get a  
20 great project here and we get the channel deepened  
21 and we get in four million TEUs of throughput --  
22 through -- that's going to be a lot of trucks, a  
23 lot of trains, a lot of ships, a lot of diesel  
24 pollution that's going to be going through mostly  
25 African American neighborhoods and other

1 communities that have environmental justice  
2 concerns.

3 And so far, the Port has done nothing to  
4 alleviate any of their pollution on the present  
5 project, done absolutely nothing on cold ironing  
6 or using clean trucks. So I think your  
7 consideration should consider the fact that the  
8 Port does nothing right now, and unless you  
9 require it, they're not going to do anything on  
10 air pollution. Thank you.

11 JOHN SNEED:

12 Good evening. My name is John Sneed.  
13 I'm a resident of Gulfport. It's J-O-H-N,  
14 S-N-E-E-D. I live at 141 Bayou Circle, Gulfport,  
15 Mississippi. I'm a native. I am president of  
16 Stewart, Sneed, Hewes Insurance Agency, which is a  
17 division of BancorpSouth. My presence here  
18 tonight is twofold. I'm here as a member of the  
19 Harrison County Development Commission and as an  
20 individual and president of my agency,  
21 businessman.

22 On behalf of the Harrison County  
23 Development Commission -- which is a county  
24 economic development consortium, consisting of 12  
25 people, five appointed by the Board of

1 Supervisors, two by the governor and seven -- or  
2 excuse me -- five others by the cities within our  
3 county. We're in charge with economic development  
4 in this county by statute.

5 I would like to recognize that we  
6 recognize the importance of the Port for economic  
7 development and are fully in favor of the project.  
8 At our regularly scheduled meeting this morning, I  
9 did -- we had a resolution passed that -- in favor  
10 of the efforts to maintain and deepen the channel.  
11 I will not read the resolution, but I would like  
12 to enter it into the record, as indicated, Craig.

13 And in summary, it says, the Resolution  
14 of the Harrison County Development Commission  
15 re-affirming its support for deepening of the  
16 Navigational Channel, serving the Mississippi  
17 State Port of Gulfport and the restoration and  
18 expansion of the Mississippi State Port at  
19 Gulfport, and with all the appropriate legal  
20 whereases passed and in the unanimosity by the  
21 members in attendance this morning. And I will  
22 enter that into the record.

23 Secondly, my second presence here, as I  
24 said, is individually and as a businessman. I  
25 have an -- we have an insurance agency that

1 employees 178 people in Mississippi and 575 in  
2 seven other states in the United States. It's  
3 time -- sometimes, we -- I -- this is a little bit  
4 self-serving. I want to have full disclosure. We  
5 are the insurance agent for the Port. Have been  
6 since 1972. And I have been hesitant in the past  
7 to speak because of that because I think that  
8 people would appear that -- think I would be  
9 appearing as self-serving.

10 But some -- you know, it's easy to be  
11 against things. It's very easy in this country to  
12 be anti-things because -- and that's what gets all  
13 the media print and all the television coverage.  
14 And sometimes it's time for the silent majority to  
15 speak, so I'm here representing what I think is  
16 something of a silent majority. And I want you to  
17 know that we are in full support in our agency of  
18 the Port and on behalf of the businessmen that  
19 represent -- that are represented by Harrison  
20 County Development Commission.

21 That -- I always say that without the  
22 Port, we might as well be in Topeka, Kansas with  
23 Dorothy because that's a vital situation to us,  
24 that makes us different from Topeka or any place  
25 else in the midwest. So I would like to close

1 by -- I didn't realize that we would agree, but --  
2 and I didn't know what an EIS was before I walked  
3 in this meeting, but I've decided you might want  
4 to change it to Economic Impact Study, instead of  
5 Environmental Impact Study. I do agree with  
6 Howard on that. But I want to thank you for your  
7 time and say that we are in full support of the  
8 activities of the Port. Thank you.

9 MS. FITZGERALD:

10 Toshja Brown, it is now your turn to  
11 make your comments. Spencer Garrett, you will be  
12 our next speaker.

13 TOSHJA BROWN:

14 Hello. Toshja Brown, T-O-S-H-J-A  
15 B-R-O-W-N. And I just wanted to make a brief  
16 comment about the Corps looking at the port  
17 expansion in a more holistic manner. I was drawn  
18 in particular to the poster to my right that shows  
19 all the other projects in the Port vicinity. And  
20 I think that it's very clear that each of those  
21 projects stand alone and are different, but it's  
22 also clear, because the Corps put them all  
23 together, that there are some things that need to  
24 be looked at and considered.

25 And the word that's used up there is to

1 consider, but not study. That gives me reason to  
2 pause because I consider a lot of things, but it  
3 doesn't mean I give it a lot of depth, and I'm  
4 wondering -- and I would like to just encourage  
5 the Corps to give it more than just consideration.  
6 Because those other projects, when considered with  
7 the expansion of the Port, create a huge impact  
8 or -- in several communities in this -- in  
9 Gulfport.

10 I'm from Gulfport. And as much as I  
11 want jobs and economic development, I also want a  
12 healthy and safe port, and so I would just like to  
13 express my concern about the degree of relevancy  
14 between considering those other projects and  
15 actually studying them and to encourage the Corps  
16 to weigh this entire project and its impact on our  
17 community. Thank you.

18 MS. FITZGERALD:

19 Spencer Garrett, it is now your turn to  
20 make your comments. Rose Johnson will be our next  
21 speaker.

22 SPENCER GARRETT:

23 My name is Spencer, S-P-E-N-C-E-R,  
24 G-A-R-R-E-T-T, from Gautier. I'm a businessman on  
25 the Coast, but my business does not rely upon the

1 Port. I have -- however, I am commander of the  
2 Navy Reserve and have served in units that support  
3 civilian shipping, particularly over in New  
4 Orleans.

5 The first comment I would make is simply  
6 about environmental impact. There won't be any  
7 from this thing. I mean, the fish will still  
8 swim. The birds will still fly. You know, it --  
9 you know, we're not talking about a large -- a  
10 large project here in terms of that. Secondly, in  
11 terms of the port itself, I would urge the Corps  
12 to think of what happens if you don't dig this  
13 channel out. My urging would be for you to dig it  
14 as much as possible.

15 I know for a fact from friends of mine  
16 who work in the shipping industry in New Orleans,  
17 they're looking for alternate ports to go to  
18 besides New Orleans. I know there's some  
19 considerations about whether or not y'all are  
20 allowed to consider that.

21 But if you don't dig -- if you don't dig  
22 this channel out, with the new Panamax II  
23 standards that have come about, what's going to  
24 happen is that this port will die. Gulfport,  
25 Mississippi is probably the best-named city in

1 America. Without that port, this city would be  
2 nothing more than Long Beach, Long Beacher, I  
3 guess, I mean, or Longer Beach.

4 You know, there's -- this is what this  
5 city does. We have the rail hub here. We have  
6 the port here. We have the airport here.

7 Throughout history, cities have cropped up in  
8 order -- as hubs of commerce and transportation.

9 And you can go out west and see what happens when  
10 transportation bypasses it. You know, they call  
11 them ghost towns. They used to be where the stage  
12 coach lines -- stage coaches would have to get the  
13 horses water. Then the trains came by. They  
14 didn't need as many watering holes, and so those  
15 towns withered and died.

16 If you go 100 miles to the -- 120 miles  
17 to the east here, you can see the same thing going  
18 on with the Port of Pensacola. They built a  
19 bridge half a mile north of the port, so they've  
20 limited how far north they can go. And then in  
21 the 80s, they didn't expand the draft of the  
22 harbor, and so the Navy, because aircraft carriers  
23 had to -- or were getting deeper -- the Navy  
24 pulled its aircraft carrier out.

25 With the Panamax II standards, the same

1 thing will happen here. We must dig this port out  
2 further or this channel out further. Otherwise,  
3 this whole port will shrivel up. This is the  
4 second largest city in -- in the state and, you  
5 know, instead of adding 20 thousand people, we can  
6 subtract 20 thousand people. The number one  
7 priority around here needs to be jobs. And the  
8 reason this city has grown in 100 years is because  
9 of this port.

10 So I would urge you-all to take not only  
11 look at the environmental impact, as mere as it  
12 will be, but the economic impact of not expanding  
13 this port. Ships are going to get bigger. That's  
14 just -- that's why they have created Panamax II,  
15 the second Panama Canal. And without that -- you  
16 know, up and down the East Coast, they're already  
17 funding deeper and deeper channels. Each state is  
18 doing so. We need to know early from you-all that  
19 we're going to be allowed to do that here, as  
20 well. And I thank you for your time.

21 MS. FITZGERALD:

22 Rose Johnson. It is now your turn to  
23 make your comments. And Oscar Eckhoff will be our  
24 second speaker.

25 ROSE JOHNSON:

1           Hi. Good evening. Rose Johnson,  
2 R-O-S-E, J-O-H-N-S-O-N. And my concern this  
3 evening is to make -- or to ask the Corps to  
4 adequately address environmental justice. It  
5 seems to me that you are moving forward in the  
6 right direction and that you are hearing our  
7 concerns, but we want to make sure that you look  
8 at the impact that this port expansion would have  
9 on low-income, under-served minority communities.  
10 I realize that you're talking about the expansion  
11 on the Port of Gulfport, but that expansion would  
12 mean a huge increase in traffic, in transportation  
13 in rail yards -- I mean, the railroad that would  
14 be coming through our community.

15           So we want you to make sure that all the  
16 applicants are working from the same set of facts  
17 and forecasts on traffic, on air pollution and  
18 wetland laws. We want to see a roadside -- a  
19 roadside air and noise study done for the port  
20 connector road. We want you to also look at the  
21 flooding impact from all of these connected  
22 projects. We want to make sure that one  
23 population does not disproportionately bear the  
24 burden of pollution from these connected projects.  
25 And I thank you.

1 MS. FITZGERALD:

2 Oscar Eckhoff, it is now your turn to  
3 make your comments. And M. Derek Barrentine will  
4 be the next speaker.

5 OSCAR ECKHOFF:

6 Oscar Eckhoff, spelled E-C-K-H-O-F-F.  
7 I'm a geologist, geophysicist, oceanographer. I  
8 used to work for NAVOCEANO. I'm a lifetime -- or  
9 life member of the World Future Society. Ships  
10 are used to carry things like oil and other things  
11 that come from the ground. And when those things  
12 get used up, there will be fewer ships. And I  
13 think it's going to happen in the lifetime of most  
14 people. Not my lifetime, but yours.

15 An economic collapse is inevitable.  
16 Whether you like it or not, it is going to happen,  
17 and that means there's going to be massive  
18 unemployment and massive starvation. The Panama  
19 Canal is wasting -- or Panama is wasting its money  
20 building another canal to expand the present ones.  
21 The human brain -- the human brain is incapable of  
22 thinking about the future. In the past, geologic  
23 past, anthropologic past, it didn't have any  
24 relevance whatsoever what am I going to think --  
25 what's going to happen five years from now --

1 about what I'm doing right now. It has absolutely  
2 no interest to me what's going to happen five  
3 years from now.

4 We have now reached a point where it  
5 does make a difference what happens in five years  
6 from now. And we don't care what happens 50 years  
7 from now. And 50 years from now, I'm afraid this  
8 Port is going to be useless.

9 MS. FITZGERALD:

10 M. Derek Barrentine, it is now your turn  
11 to make your comments. And William T. Stone will  
12 be the next speaker. Would M. Derek Barrentine  
13 like to make a comment?

14 (No response.)

15 MS. FITZGERALD:

16 We'll move on to William T. Stone. It  
17 is now your turn. And Glenn Cobb will be our next  
18 speaker.

19 BILL STONE:

20 I'm Bill Stone, S-T-O-N-E. I'm retired  
21 from Lockheed Martin, worked on many government  
22 projects, DOD, and in particular NASA. Many of  
23 them required these EISes. It's been my  
24 experience that these EISes do some things, but  
25 they also hinder many things. In fact, sometimes

1 they've held up -- it held up projects so long  
2 that by the time they actually got approved, our  
3 concept was obsolete. I want to encourage you to  
4 try to get things done. If you don't get things  
5 done, we won't be able to create the jobs and  
6 things we're talking about.

7 One of my concerns, I looked around, and  
8 I couldn't figure out what -- the baseline you're  
9 working to. I don't know. Maybe it's on your  
10 website. I haven't looked. But I would like to  
11 have someone tell me where the baseline is that  
12 you're trying to work to. And one of the things I  
13 struggle with is the depth you're going to fill  
14 in. I saw tonight in your work you're saying 25  
15 feet. I thought that was put to bed several  
16 months ago. It's not going to be 25 feet, so why  
17 are we considering 25 feet? If you consider these  
18 things that aren't going to happen and you study  
19 all these things -- which are great, but it's a  
20 waste of time and money. So I think you ought to  
21 have a baseline to which we actually adhere to.

22 And the biggest thing is, I can see if  
23 an EIS hit all the ideas we have been talking  
24 about tonight, from economics to public  
25 involvement, pollution, environmental concerns,

1 but let's keep one thing in mind, if we don't get  
2 something going and try to create an environment  
3 of which the United States can compete with other  
4 countries of the world, we're going to be behind.

5 We're already losing so much now to  
6 other parts of the world in manufacturing and what  
7 have you because we can't keep up. The reason why  
8 we can't keep up, we spend too much time studying  
9 and not doing.

10 MS. FITZGERALD:

11 Glenn Cobb, it is now your turn to make  
12 your comments. And Reilly Morse will be our next  
13 speaker.

14 GLENN COBB:

15 Good evening my name is Glenn,  
16 G-L-E-N-N, last name Cobb, C-O-B-B. I'm a member  
17 of the Port Campaign Coalition, Member of the  
18 Pathways Committee and also a member of the North  
19 Gulfport City Club. We -- in the north Gulfport  
20 community, we are very optimistic about your  
21 ability to include some of the concerns that we  
22 have in the North Gulfport community. And we want  
23 to thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for  
24 being here on this evening.

25 We are hoping that we are at the table

1 when decisions are being made about this project.  
2 We hope that you include us in all your  
3 conversations and we are willing and able to work  
4 with you for the progress here in Gulfport. Thank  
5 you so much.

6 MS. FITZGERALD:

7 Reilly Morse, it is now your turn to  
8 make your comments. Michael Vitt will be our next  
9 speaker.

10 REILLY MORSE:

11 Good evening. I'm Reilly Morse. That's  
12 R-E-I-L-L-Y, M-O-R-S-E. I'm a lifelong resident  
13 of Gulfport, and I'm an attorney at the  
14 Mississippi Center for Justice, where I represent  
15 the Steps Coalition and the Port Campaign  
16 Coalition. I also sat at a dinner table growing  
17 up listening to my father, Stanford Morse, talk  
18 about the trials and tribulations of growing  
19 economic development in South Mississippi, as the  
20 author of the legislature creating the Harrison  
21 County Development Commission and the attorney for  
22 more than two decades for the Commission.

23 So while some may mistakenly assume that  
24 I have some agenda to kill the economic  
25 development or in some may bar or impede it, I

1 wish to take a moment to disabuse each and every  
2 one of them of that fact. So the Port's -- the  
3 modification to this application is a welcomed  
4 development. It has been something which the Port  
5 Campaign Coalition and the Steps Coalition have  
6 sought for some time, to have a functioning set of  
7 elements that will actually allow the Port to  
8 achieve the larger throughput that would achieve  
9 the job creation goals and other elements. We  
10 welcome the addition of the amendment to this  
11 effect.

12 We also welcome the consideration of the  
13 related projects, the Domain, the 33rd Street  
14 property, the Port Connector Road. We welcome the  
15 fact that the Port application and this new EIS is  
16 going to take a coordinated look at these things.  
17 We think that's particularly important when it  
18 comes to the environmental justice portion.  
19 Because left to its own devices, when the Port did  
20 its own environment analysis and looked at the  
21 environmental justice effects of its activities,  
22 it looked at Census Tract 14.

23 Both of my sets of grandparents and  
24 parents grew up the oldest, whitest, most  
25 non-environmental justice community in existence

1 on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and so it's  
2 necessary for the Corps, in doing this  
3 environmental justice analysis, to look at other  
4 locations, including Census Tracts 2, 23, 24 and  
5 18, the ones through whose neighborhoods this  
6 increased traffic and throughput would pass. And  
7 we think that it's necessary to look at those  
8 effects as part of the overall connected activity  
9 that goes through the Port. And that's, after  
10 all, the whole reason we're deepening the channel,  
11 is to let more TEUs come in and then make their  
12 way into the harbor.

13 We also ask that the scoping evaluate,  
14 in the process of looking at air emissions issues,  
15 the various ways through more modern technology to  
16 avoid and minimize and mitigate air emissions from  
17 ships onboard transit trains and trucks, to look  
18 elsewhere in the United States and overseas at the  
19 many really interesting GreenPort technologies  
20 that are underway elsewhere. With close to six  
21 hundred million dollars to spend on the port  
22 expansion, we would hope that they would truly  
23 pursue a state-of-the-art set of standards that  
24 their tenants would want to welcome and evaluate.

25 We finally ask that when this analysis

1 takes place and we have this conciliation of both  
2 projects, that the throughput, the forecast about  
3 traffic coming through the port from this expanded  
4 channel be used uniformly across the study and in  
5 consideration of the other projects.

6 One of the shortcomings we saw in  
7 previous projects was various conflicting  
8 forecasts about how much traffic would go through.  
9 And we think that consistency and correctly  
10 analyzing requires a uniform set of baseline  
11 numbers. Thank you very much.

12 MS. FITZGERALD:

13 Michael Vitt, it is now your turn to  
14 speak. W.M. or William Davis will be our next  
15 speaker.

16 MICHAEL VITT:

17 Good evening. I'm Mike Vitt. That's V,  
18 as victory, I-T-T. I'm a resident of Hancock  
19 County, but I'm here on behalf of my company,  
20 which is Gulfport Towing, a ship assist company  
21 that provides ship docking services to the ships  
22 that call in the Port of Gulfport. We have seven  
23 employees at one time. However, because of  
24 Katrina and the reduction in ship calls, we're  
25 down to three. I can assure you that there would

1 be a dramatic increase in employment in our  
2 company if the proposed project is completed.

3 My theme here tonight is very simple.  
4 If you build it, they will come. If you don't,  
5 they won't. It's real simple. The Ports of  
6 Norfolk and other East Coast ports have strongly  
7 started this project that was mentioned earlier.  
8 The other ports know that the Panama Canal  
9 deepening and widening will, in fact, create a lot  
10 of traffic to the East and Gulf Coasts. If  
11 Gulfport doesn't do this project, it's our belief,  
12 based on our business model and information from  
13 our worldwide client base, that the Port of  
14 Gulfport will be bypassed.

15 I can tell you, our company not only  
16 does ship docking here in Gulfport, but also the  
17 Port of New Orleans. We're one of the larger ship  
18 docking companies in the Port of New Orleans. Our  
19 customers tell us they would rather come to a  
20 place like Gulfport. It's cheaper for them. It's  
21 a quick in-and-out. Once the channel is completed  
22 and the modifications made, as per the request by  
23 the Port, it will be a very simple thing for a  
24 ship to come in, drop its cargo and move on to the  
25 next location.

1           That efficiency is what the worldwide  
2 shipping community wants. They don't want to come  
3 to a place like New Orleans where it takes them 12  
4 hours to get up river and then the subsequent  
5 delays of any congested ports.

6           You've got almost a complete blank  
7 blueprint. As such, you can do a tremendous  
8 amount of good by accepting the modifications that  
9 the Port proposes. In addition, safety and  
10 navigation is a paramount concern of the Corps of  
11 Engineers. The current channel depths and widths  
12 are not maintained to the authorized widths or  
13 depths. As such, the vessels that call here have  
14 to light load.

15           It's a fact that ships who call in  
16 Gulfport have to go to New Orleans first because  
17 they can't carry the draft to make the money that  
18 they need to in order to perpetuate trade in and  
19 out of Gulfport. As such, we're benefiting the  
20 people of Louisiana, not the people of Mississippi  
21 and particularly the Gulf Coast. And as a  
22 resident here, I know that hurts. Even though I  
23 live in Hancock County, anything that happens in  
24 Harrison to the benefit of its citizens, also, in  
25 effect, helps those around it.

1           And finally, I would like to provide  
2 written comments to the Corps expounding on these  
3 points. But in conclusion, I want to thank you  
4 for your time to come out here tonight. And I  
5 want to remind everyone in the audience, if you  
6 build it, they will come. If you don't, they  
7 won't. Thank you.

8 MS. FITZGERALD:

9           W.M. or William Davis, it is now your  
10 turn to make your comments. Murrell "Rusty"  
11 Hilton will be our next speaker.

12 WILLIAM DAVIS:

13           My name is William Davis. I'm a service  
14 provider at the port for about 40-something years.  
15 I'm also a retired longshoreman after 28 years.  
16 And I can tell you, I've got a family and it's  
17 economically very good placed. This project  
18 should have been started years ago. As he just  
19 mentioned, Jacksonville, Fort Wentworth, Norfolk,  
20 they didn't worry about the money. They went out  
21 and got money and built it and they're about  
22 finished. And environmentally, the little bit of  
23 disturbance which you're going to have is just  
24 like a scratch on your arm. Little bleeding.  
25 It's going to heal up. The Gulf is going to heal

1       itself and we'll be back in business.

2               As he said, he's down on people. I'm  
3 down on people. You know, that's widespread. The  
4 port is not just in -- it goes out here in a  
5 circle. That's also a part of it. And as  
6 mentioned, what we need now is to get our ditch  
7 going before we get some and lose what we have. I  
8 don't know where we stand on that, but we need to  
9 get after that. Thank you.

10       MS. FITZGERALD:

11               Murrell "Rusty" Hilton is our next  
12 speaker. Francis Fredericks will be our speaker  
13 after that.

14       MURRELL HILTON:

15               Murrell, M-U-R-R-E-L-L, Hilton,  
16 H-I-L-T-O-N. I've been associated with the Port  
17 since 1973. I worked the tugboats when I was in  
18 high school. I've been a pilot at the Port of  
19 Gulfport for over 30 years, and I've participated  
20 in the simulations. Based on the simulations,  
21 plus 30 -- over 30 years of intimate knowledge  
22 moving ships in and out of the Port of Gulfport,  
23 we have to have the deeper water. We have to have  
24 a wider channel. The ships will run more  
25 efficiently. There will be less pollution that

1 everybody seems concerned about, rightly so. The  
2 ships will make -- we'll get bigger ships. The  
3 expansion without a channel deepening -- we are  
4 moving the maximize sized ships that the channel  
5 can take right now.

6 So we've got to have the deeper water.  
7 We've got to have the wider channels. The turns  
8 have to be modified, but all of that can be taken  
9 into account of this modification. But if the  
10 Corps doesn't give us this modification, then I  
11 see very little point in any of the expansion.  
12 Thank you.

13 MS. FITZGERALD:

14 Francis Fredericks will be our next  
15 speaker and Mrs. Lettie Caldwell will be a speaker  
16 after that.

17 FRANCES FREDERICKS:

18 Good evening. F-R-A-N-C-E-S,  
19 F-R-E-D-E-R-I-C-K-S. I live in North Gulfport. I  
20 am a resident of Gulfport. I have been there most  
21 of my life. I come to you because I want you to  
22 know that most of the people in my neighborhood  
23 support the expansion of the port. There are  
24 things that we don't support, and I want to tell  
25 you what they were.

1 I live one block from the proposed road.  
2 I live three blocks from the railroad. I live  
3 about a mile from the port, walking distance, I  
4 would say. And we do not like the pollution. The  
5 air pollution is bad. We have built a new school,  
6 28th Street Elementary School, which is walking  
7 distance of the proposed road. At one time, over  
8 20 percent of the children who went to that school  
9 had asthma, over 20 percent.

10 So I'm here to ask you: If you're going  
11 to do this project, do it right and take care of  
12 all of the citizens. We don't want to see a place  
13 where you could work, but you're too sick to work.  
14 So we're asking to you, please, consider all of  
15 the things that can go wrong for the community and  
16 cause us to be the ones who pay the price for  
17 somebody else to live very comfortable. Thank  
18 you.

19 MS. FITZGERALD:

20 Mrs. Lettie Caldwell, it is now your  
21 turn to make your comments, and Mark Whetstine  
22 will be our next speaker.

23 LETTIE CALDWELL:

24 Lettie, L-E-T-T-I-E, Caldwell,  
25 C-A-L-D-W-E-L-L. I've been attending meetings

1 concerning the port since the beginning, and my  
2 impression then, as it is now, is that it creates  
3 confusion. It seems to be, in a way, not  
4 complete, but I can't prove it either way. But  
5 there is a pretense. My feeling is that we are  
6 not in an underdeveloped country, and for that  
7 reason, there should be someone who could look  
8 at -- get an overview of this before you actually  
9 get involved.

10           How can I decide that you don't do  
11 something that you've already started, that you've  
12 already invested in it? I mean, I'm not the most  
13 educated, and I'm not receiving a salary or in a  
14 position to be responsible for decision making.  
15 After you make a decision -- those of us, like the  
16 lady from North Gulfport and others, we are put in  
17 a -- we don't know it, but we're in an adversarial  
18 relationship, because the people making the big  
19 money who's going to profit from this -- I'm not  
20 saying it's a bad thing that you're doing this.  
21 It might be the best thing. I don't know. You  
22 are paid to know.

23           And why -- and when I say "you," I don't  
24 really know who -- I don't know which ones I'm  
25 speaking of because I understand that there has

1     been a change of staff. And all of you--all of the  
2     staff planning the port depend upon your salaries.  
3     And consequently, those of us in our community who  
4     need jobs are given a promise and this promise is  
5     only a pretense.

6             And it's kind of encouraging because, to  
7     me, you would not make that promise if we poor  
8     black people didn't have some kind of power or  
9     some kind of backing from federal agencies. So  
10    you feed us this line -- and I think you called it  
11    a carrot stick, something like that. And then as  
12    you go, block by block, building your project,  
13    people are waiting. And, you know, this is really  
14    abusive. It is abusive to helpless people.

15            I don't mean to go down hard. I know  
16    you're not aware many people -- I know that --  
17    from the Christian life, many times you think  
18    you're a saint, you really think -- believe you're  
19    a saint because you have not actually -- you know,  
20    it takes a long time to see who we really are.  
21    You know, we're all just out there, and I'm just  
22    saying that we, as black people, in these  
23    communities that you're polluting are being  
24    abused. And we're being abused because you are  
25    being given federal money to carry out this plan.

1           And, again, I apologize if I offended  
2 anyone because I know you probably aren't aware of  
3 what you've done because you've got to feed your  
4 family. And I say -- when I say "you," I don't  
5 know who that could be. I mean, you know who you  
6 are. Thank you.

7 MS. FITZGERALD:

8           Mark Whetstine, it is now you turn to  
9 make your comments.

10 MARK WHETSTINE:

11           My name is Mark Whetstine. That's  
12 M-A-R-K, W-H-E-T-S-T-I-N-E. I am in the trucking  
13 business. I don't know what environmental justice  
14 is. All I know is in the trucking business, we've  
15 gone through five EPA mandates for cleaner engines  
16 and cleaner fuels. As of right now, I know this  
17 has absolutely nothing to do with what you-all are  
18 talking about. But as far as the pollution  
19 problem goes in trucking, engines now are cleaner  
20 than cars, low sulfur fuel, DEF fuels,  
21 regeneration process. Everybody is worried about  
22 my trucks polluting. The cars that run up and  
23 down 30th Avenue and Highway 90 spit our more  
24 pollution than the one semi-truck, model year 2010  
25 or newer, right now.

1           And one thing I want people to remember,  
2 without trucks, you have nothing. Without this  
3 port, we have nothing. That's why we need to -- I  
4 mean, like the man said about the fish will swim  
5 and the birds will fly, the trucks will come when  
6 the port is here. No port, no trucks, no jobs.  
7 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

8 MR. LITTEKEN:

9           Okay. I think that's the end of the  
10 list of folks that have signed up to speak, so  
11 that includes the formal portion of this evening.

12           I appreciate everybody coming out and  
13 spending your time with us to share your comments.  
14 We will absolutely consider the comments in  
15 whatever form that you submit them, certainly at  
16 the podium. If you have written a comment or  
17 comments with our court reporter, that will all be  
18 considered.

19           Don't forget, you have the opportunity  
20 to send in your comments to us by mail or by  
21 e-mail. We just ask that you do that by June  
22 17th, so please send in those comments. And with  
23 that, I think we're concluded for the evening.  
24 Thank you.

25           (Meeting concluded at 7:39 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

1  
2 I, MELISSA L. BURDINE, Court Reporter and  
3 Notary Public, in and for the County of Harrison,  
4 State of Mississippi, hereby certify that the  
5 foregoing pages, and including this page, contain a  
6 true and correct transcript of the public meeting,  
7 as taken by me at the time and place heretofore  
8 stated, and later reduced to typewritten form by  
9 computer-aided transcription under my supervision,  
10 to the best of my skill and ability.

11 I further certify that I am not in the employ  
12 of, or related to, any counsel or party in this  
13 matter, and have no interest, monetary or  
14 otherwise, in the final outcome of the proceedings.

15 Witness my signature and seal, this the  
16 14th day of June, 2013.

17  
18  
19   
20 Melissa L. Burdine  
21 My Commission Expires 5/04/16  
22  
23  
24  
25