

Office of the Lieutenant Governor
State of Louisiana

BILLY NUNGESSER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



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May 29, 2019

The Honorable John Bel Edwards
Governor
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Governor Edwards:

Due to the Mississippi River breaking a 92-year flood record, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers will open the Morganza Spillway on June 2, 2019, marking only the third time in its 46-year history that this structure has been opened. The opening of the Morganza Spillway will cause severe damage to the Atchafalaya Basin, our nation's largest estuary.

With the opening of the Bonnet Carre Spillway earlier this year already having a negative impact on seafood in two states, the effect of the new fresh water flow into the Basin, added to Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne, will negatively impact the livelihoods of thousands of fisherman, and crawfish and oyster farmers. The Atchafalaya Basin is larger than the Florida Everglades, and is the nesting ground and home to more than 100 different species of fish and aquatic life. The basin is the birthplace of our commercial fishing industry. It is a biological transition zone required for the survival of many species of fish and wildlife. Allowing fresh water to flow into the delicate balance of an estuary five times more productive than any in North America, the breeding ground for a host of Gulf seafood, will be detrimental, for months, if not years to come.

I am requesting that the Louisiana Seafood Industry be included in any federal disaster assistance regarding the opening of the Morganza Spillway, and be appropriated emergency and non-emergency funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Billy Nungesser".

Billy Nungesser
Lieutenant Governor

WHN/jm

cc: Louisiana Congressional Delegation