



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 9, 2020

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Ag Commissioner Encourages Public Comments on Yazoo Area Pump Project

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson is encouraging the public to submit comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Vicksburg District as it prepares a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the Yazoo Area Pump Project in the Yazoo Backwater Area of Mississippi. The SEIS is in response to historical flooding that continues in the Yazoo Backwater Area. This area has experienced significant flooding nine out of the last ten years. Public comments can be submitted by email to YazooBackwater@usace.army.mil, and the deadline to submit comments is June 15, 2020.

“The Yazoo Backwater Area is once again experiencing a monumental flood this year. This flood event immediately follows the historic flood of 2019 that lasted approximately eight months and flooded over 550,000 acres, half of which was agricultural cropland. The flood devastated the economy and environment in the South Delta, and most of the cropland remained unplanted,” said Commissioner Gipson.

Substantial flooding in the Yazoo Backwater Area began once again in January 2020, while the South Delta’s economy continues to suffer from the 2019 flood. Approximately 500,000 acres flooded at its peak in April. Of those acres, 202,000 acres were cropland.

Commissioner Gipson said, “The backwater floods of 2019 and 2020 are the two highest backwater flood events since the completion of the Yazoo Backwater Levee and Drainage Structures in 1978. Much of the devastation that South Delta residents are facing now could have been prevented if construction of the Yazoo Backwater Area Pump Project had been completed.”

The Yazoo Backwater Area Pump Project was designed and authorized to alleviate backwater flooding and protect the livelihood of area residents. However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) vetoed the project in 2008, even though it was a federally-authorized USACE Civil Works project. The USACE and EPA are now considering a new project plan to complete the Yazoo Area Pump Project. The SEIS as described previously is one of the first steps in moving forward to complete the project.

“Nearly 100,000 acres that should have been planted in soybeans and corn are still flooded today. It’s time to stop talking about it. It’s time to finish the pumps. To show your support of farmers and residents in the South Delta, please send comments to the USACE by June 15 urging the completion of the pumps,” said Commissioner Gipson.

The notice of intent can be viewed at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/04/16/2020-07966/notice-of-intent-to-prepare-supplemental-environmental-impact-statement-for-the-yazoo-area-pump>. Visit www.forgottenbackwaterflood.com for more information.

Click https://youtu.be/iPzHFfYsl_0 to view Commissioner Gipson’s entire message.

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