



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 24, 2020

Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
(601) 359-1163 / (cell) (662) 312-5897
Paige@mdac.ms.gov

Hannah East, Marketing Specialist
(601) 359-1179
HannahE@mdac.ms.gov

Agriculture Commissioner Andy Gipson Encourages Public to Submit Comments on Yazoo Area Pump Project

JACKSON, Miss. – Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson is encouraging the public to submit comments of support for the completion of the Yazoo Area Pump Project to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The deadline to submit comments is Monday, November 30, 2020.

“We’ve seen the devastation that the backwater flooding has caused to Mississippi agriculture, farmers, ranchers and wildlife for years now, unnecessarily. The solution is simple, we need to finish the Yazoo Pump Project, which would prevent flood damage to urban and agricultural areas throughout the state for years to come. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently accepting comments from citizens through Monday, November 30, on the Yazoo Area Pump Project, and I encourage all Mississippians to take a moment and submit a comment of support,” said Commissioner Gipson. “We need to stand up for our friends in the Mississippi South Delta and help them in their time of need. It’s time to finish the pumps.”

The public can submit comments by texting PUMPS to 50457, visiting www.forgottenbackwaterflood.com, filling out a postcard at one of the specified locations listed below, emailing yazoobackwater@usace.army.mil or sending a letter directly to the Vicksburg District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ office.

The Vicksburg District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers office is located at 4155 East Clay Street in Vicksburg, Mississippi, 39183. Postcards can be found and submitted at Valley Park Elevator in Valley Park; Lo-Sto and Yore Convenience Store in Eagle Lake; Mississippi Ag Company and Chuck’s Dairy Bar in Rolling Fork; Mississippi Levee Board and Sherman’s Restaurant in Greenville; Toney’s Grill in Vicksburg; and the Mississippi Delta Council in Stoneville.

Postcards from these locations will be collected on Saturday, November 28. Comments sent in via mail, email, text or online are due by Monday, November 30. For more information, visit www.forgottenbackwaterflood.com.

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Letter attached.



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

November 19, 2020

District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
4155 East Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183

**Re: Draft Supplement No. 2 to the 1982 Yazoo Area Pump Project Final
Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear District Engineer:

On behalf of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the farmers of the Mississippi South Delta, I respectfully submit these comments regarding Draft Supplement No. 2 to the 1982 Yazoo Area Pump Project Final Environmental Impact Statement.

I applaud the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and its re-evaluation of the Yazoo Area Pump Project. As you are keenly aware, the Yazoo Backwater Area of Mississippi has experienced significant flooding nine out of the past 10 years. Agriculture is Mississippi's number one industry, and these floods negatively impact agriculture on an annual basis. During the historic flood of 2019, over 550,000 acres, of which more than 225,000 acres were agricultural cropland, were flooded. Most of this cropland was not planted due to the flood. The economic and environmental impact to the South Delta was devastating, and this was observed again during 2020. Damage to the agricultural industry poured through the rest of the community as well: hardware stores, banks, restaurants; education funding was decreased; churches were flooded; homes were destroyed. This is beginning to be the new normal in the Yazoo Backwater Area. Completion of the Yazoo Area Pump Project is a dire need to prevent this annual devastation.

As described in the "Draft Supplement No. 2 to the 1982 Yazoo Area Pump Project Final Environmental Impact Statement," the USACE re-evaluated the recommended plan to complete the Yazoo Area Pump Project using new and current environmental data. Findings of the study included reduction of average annual flood damages to urban and agricultural areas through a combination of structural and nonstructural flood damage reduction features, minimization of adverse impacts through project design, and a net gain in environmental value to the entire Yazoo Backwater Area. Additionally, mitigation will be used to compensate for any unavoidable losses to environmental resources from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan represents a balanced approach to address flood damage reduction and environmental issues using new environmental data.

The findings detailed in Draft Supplement No. 2 provide no evidence or reasoning that support further delay of the Yazoo Area Pump Project. In contrast, the study indicates that there will be a net gain in environmental value to the entire Yazoo Backwater Area. Flooding not only devastates human communities but also have decimated wildlife and wildlife habitat in the area. Because of this, I urge the USACE to act swiftly in implementing the Proposed Plan as described in Draft Supplement No. 2. This will greatly benefit the citizens of Mississippi, Mississippi's number one industry, and the abundant natural resources found in the state.

In closing, I want to thank you once again for your attention to the Yazoo Area Pump Project. If this project is not completed in a timely manner, the future of the Mississippi South Delta is at great and permanent risk. Mississippi looks forward to the completion of this much needed flood control structure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Gipson".

Andy Gipson
Commissioner