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## PRESS RELEASES

May 19, 2010

### Vitter Secures Corps Reform Commitments, Pushes for Further Accountability

**Seeks audit of Corps Katrina and Rita projects, withholding of salaries for missed deadlines**

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Sen. David Vitter today secured commitments that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will meet long-overdue deadlines for flood control projects in Louisiana. After receiving assurances that the Corps will fulfill its statutory obligations, Vitter released his hold on the promotion of Army Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh to major general. Walsh's current job duties were never at stake during the hold negotiations.

"From the beginning, this disagreement was about holding the Corps' feet to the fire and demanding that a broken and irresponsible bureaucracy be held accountable. Now that we've made significant progress toward reforming the Corps, I've released my objections to General Walsh's promotion and will renew my focus to hold the Corps accountable to fulfilling what is already authorized in current law," said Vitter.

Vitter's objection came only after years of missed deadlines on reports and repeated failures by the Corps to fulfill its legally designated requirement to ensure flood protection for vulnerable south Louisiana communities. As a result of Vitter's objections, the Corps promised to complete strengthening of New Orleans-area outfall canal walls by June 30, 2011, and to ensure that the Louisiana Water Resources Council is fully operational by October 1, 2010. Additionally, the Corps pledged to complete reports on the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Restoration Plan and four feasibility reports by 2012 and to finish the final Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration report by July of this year.


"It's revealing of how the Corps does business that we had to force the Corps to give an answer for why it has consistently failed to complete projects and reports in a timely way," said Vitter. "As you might expect, I will be tracking their progress to enforce all of these new commitments and deadlines and to ensure that any broken commitments or re-missed deadlines have serious consequences."

In addition to the Corps' promises to meet its deadlines, Vitter is working to further reform the Corps by attempting to secure language in the next the Water Resources Development Act that would request that the Corps be penalized \$100,000 per week from its salaries and expenses accounts for each week a statutory deadline is missed or ignored.

Vitter also introduced a bill today to require the Government Accountability Office and the National Academies of Public Administration and Engineering to conduct a full audit of hurricane protection funding and cost estimates associated with post-Katrina hurricane protection. The audit would attempt to identify the causes for the extraordinary miscalculations related to previous cost estimates, conduct an analysis of resources available and required work and identify strategies to replenish reprogrammed funding from out-year work to immediate needs.

"We all know that the Corps has a tendency to say one thing and then let the bureaucracy do the opposite. My two proposals hold them to their responsibilities. If they miss a deadline, they feel financial ramifications – much like the Louisianans who feel hardship because of Corps delays or bureaucratic pushback," added Vitter. "And since the Corps always seems to need more funding for projects than originally estimated by their own projects, I think Louisianans deserve the right to look at the books to make sure our tax dollars are being spent effectively to provide us with the best storm protection."

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