



## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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### **MONUMENTAL BOONDOGGLE HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS**

**NEW ORLEANS** – The people of St. Bernard Parish want it gone. The St. Bernard Parish Council passed a resolution asking that it be shut down. U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu issued a statement supporting the parish’s efforts to close it. The state’s junior senator, David Vitter, says get rid of it. In February, the Louisiana State Legislature passed a resolution urging Congress to close it. Congress passed a resolution that has halted its upkeep.

But the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet seems to have more lives than a cat.

“I think Hurricane Katrina exposed MRGO for what it is – a huge government boondoggle that not only costs millions of dollars to create and maintain, but also put people and property in harm’s way,” says Leslie March, Chair of the Sierra Club’s Delta Chapter (Louisiana). “The Corps recklessly ignored warnings about the potential impact of the channel – to people and to the marshes that protect people. Unfortunately, the laws that would have required an assessment of the potential impact were not yet in place when this channel was built. Now, though, I think most responsible people realize it’s time to reconsider the MRGO.”

However, the Port of New Orleans and some politicians do not seem willing to let go of the project and have linked it to the equally controversial construction of a new

larger lock leading from the Mississippi River into the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal – the wharf area served by MRGO.

“The Sierra Club of Louisiana firmly believes that closing the MRGO should not be linked to the lock project,” says March. “This lock project has been rated one of the biggest boondoggles ever, according to Taxpayers for Common Sense, and any plan that leaves the MRGO open, even with gates, leaves people and neighborhoods at risk. Even when it is politically difficult, taking steps that prevent a disaster from happening is far easier than what we are going through now.

March says it would be irrational and reckless to keep the MRGO for another decade while we wait for gates and a lock to be built. “There are other solutions that are cheaper and better than spending money on the locks, the gates, and maintaining the MRGO. It’s nonsense. We would be exposing ourselves to more flooding with that plan. We must come up with a faster, safer, cheaper plan now.”

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The Sierra Club's 700,000 members work together to protect communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Delta (Louisiana) chapter of the Sierra Club has more than 3,500 members and has been active in local conservation projects for more than 30 years. For more information, contact the organization's website: [www.louisiana.sierraclub.org](http://www.louisiana.sierraclub.org).