

Joe Hassinger Joins Regional Leaders to Mark Beginning of the 2016 Hurricane Season

New Orleans, LA – June 1, 2016 – (As reported by the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East)

Today, the President of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – East (SLFPA-E), Lambert J. Hassinger Jr., joined other regional leaders at a press conference held at the Port of New Orleans, marking the beginning of the 2016 hurricane season.

In remarks, Hassinger discussed the Flood Protection Authority's preparations for the 2016 hurricane season. "The Flood Protection Authority has collaborated with its regional partners and rigorously exercised flood control structures in its jurisdiction to ensure that the Authority is prepared for the 2016 hurricane season. We would not be at this level of preparedness if not for the tireless efforts of the Authority-East and Levee District employees. Their expertise as well as their dedication to the citizens of Louisiana is second to none."

Other speakers included Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Col. Richard Hansen, FEMA Executive Director Mike Womack, National Weather Service New Orleans Meteorologist-in-Charge Kenneth Graham, U.S. Coast Guard Captain Wayne Arguin, and City of New Orleans Director of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness Aaron Miller, as well as local government leaders. The speakers highlighted hurricane preparedness and public safety, coordination between local, state, and federal organizations and government agencies, and the capability of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDDRS).

The region's hurricane flood risk reduction system is one of the strongest and largest of its kind in the United States and significantly diminishes the risk of flooding for over 1 million residents in the New Orleans Metropolitan area. However, as the 2016 hurricane season approaches, SLFPA-E officials urge residents to create a plan of action to be followed as a tropical weather event approaches.

Flood Protection Authority Board of Commissioners President Hassinger said, "The regional flood risk reduction system has performed well during past tropical weather events. However, evacuation is always the first line of defense against flooding. Residents should consider flood risk reduction a personal and community responsibility by having and implementing an evacuation plan when necessary or directed by local officials."

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Nearly \$14 billion was committed to improve regional flood risk reduction systems, but Authority-East officials say more is needed, citing that a 100-year-level flood protection system is the bare minimum required to purchase affordable federal flood insurance. Many local decision makers and emergency operations directors believe that south Louisiana needs a minimum 500-year-level of protection; achieving this higher level of protection is one of the Authority-East's primary objectives.

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