

Town Meeting

Concerning the

U.S. Department of Energy

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement:

Site Selection for the Expansion of  
the Strategic Petroleum Reserve

Date: Thursday, April 10, 2008

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 10:15 p.m.

Location: Pascagoula Civic Center  
Shortcut Road  
Pascagoula, Mississippi

Rheannon R. Miller, CCR

1 MR. JOHNSON: I'll bring this meeting to  
2 order. My name is David Johnson. I'm with the  
3 Office of Oil Reserves, the U.S. Department of  
4 Energy. The U.S. Department of Energy selected the  
5 Richton Salt Dome in Perry County, Mississippi in  
6 2007 to be the location of a new 160 million barrel  
7 storage site for the Strategic Oil Reserve.

8 Since this selection, there have been a  
9 number of environmental and public concerns raised  
10 with respect to the location of our raw water  
11 source, our brine disposal, as well as where we are  
12 proposing locating our oil terminal. As a result,  
13 we have initiated the preparation of a supplemental  
14 EIS to address these concerns, to work with the  
15 communities and the environmental groups to resolve  
16 these issues.

17 This week we have held public meetings in  
18 Perry, Greene, George and now in Jackson County.  
19 These meetings were all conducted in an open house  
20 forum, to provide as much information on the  
21 project as we can, but to also interact with the  
22 public and to understand the concerns.

23 At the request of Congressman Taylor, we  
24 have added this Town Hall portion to this meeting,  
25 to receive public comments directly to us in a

1 customary fashion.

2 At this point I would like to introduce  
3 Karen Faley (phonetic), who will discuss the  
4 procedures for this portion.

5 MS. FALEY: Thank you. In a few moments  
6 we will be starting the public hearing portion of  
7 tonight. First, I want to remind people that right  
8 now we are in the process that is referred to as  
9 scoping. The purpose of collecting comments during  
10 the scoping period is to figure out what the  
11 environmental concerns are, how we should best  
12 conduct our environmental analysis and what range  
13 of alternatives you need to consider in our  
14 documents.

15 We will be continuing to accept comments  
16 through the scoping period, until April 29th. We  
17 will then conduct our environmental study in detail  
18 over the next year and expect to have our draft  
19 environmental impact statement prepared some time  
20 next Spring.

21 At that point, the document will be  
22 distributed to citizens who are on our mailing and  
23 who requested a copy, state and local officials.  
24 It will be available in public libraries. It will  
25 also be available on the Internet. And we will

1 give you 45 days to review the document and to  
2 comment on that document.

3 At that time we will come back and have  
4 more meetings, just as this, in order to receive  
5 comments on the draft environmental impact  
6 statement. Then we will go back and we will revise  
7 that document, publish the final environmental  
8 impact statement in August 2009, or some time in  
9 the early Fall.

10 And then after a 30-day no-action period,  
11 where the decision makers consider the document,  
12 they will make a decision and publish it in the  
13 Federal Register as a Record of Decision.

14 There are several opportunities to  
15 comment. At all of our open houses we have had a  
16 court reporter available to receive oral comments,  
17 as well as we have had forms where people can  
18 either submit their comments in writing during the  
19 meetings or take them home and consider the  
20 information they have been given and mail them in.

21 As I said, we will be accepting comments  
22 until April 29th. You can write your comments in  
23 by e-mail or by mail. You may also fax them to us.  
24 Or you may continue to sign up and speak tonight.

25 Now, the way that we will be holding the

1 public hearing portion is I will call speakers as  
2 they have signed up to the microphone to talk.  
3 Only comments that are made at the microphone will  
4 be recorded into the record. We do have a court  
5 reporter present. I will call elected officials  
6 first and then I will call everyone as they appear  
7 on the registration list.

8 Now, right now I have probably thirty-plus  
9 people that have signed up. And I also want to  
10 make additional time available for people who want  
11 to continue to sign up. Because we have so many  
12 people we are going to limit the time to about two  
13 to three minutes. I have a card here -- the  
14 yellow, I will give you a one-minute warning; red,  
15 I will ask you politely to please stop your  
16 comments, so that other people may make comments.

17 Again, the purpose of making comments is  
18 for scoping. We will not be answering questions,  
19 again because of the number of people that want to  
20 comment. But DOE staff will continue to be  
21 available throughout the evening, after the public  
22 hearing portion is over, in order to answer  
23 people's questions.

24 When you come up -- when I call your name  
25 and you come up to speak, please state your name

1 clearly and spell your name, so that the court  
2 reporter has an accurate record.

3 At this time I would like to begin the  
4 public hearing by calling Bill Felder of  
5 Congressman Taylor's office to the microphone to  
6 speak.

7 MR. FELDER: Thank you. My name is Bill  
8 Felder. I am here representing Congressman Gene  
9 Taylor. I am here to read a statement into the  
10 record.

11 Today the Congressman actually sent this  
12 letter to the Honorable Stanley W. Bodman  
13 (phonetic), U.S. Department of Energy. The  
14 statement: In December I sent a letter to the  
15 Department of Energy urging the Agency to hold  
16 additional hearings, so that the Agency can  
17 directly hear the questions and concerns of the  
18 people of South Mississippi.

19 In addition, I, along with Senators  
20 Cochran and Wicker, sent the Department an  
21 additional letter asking them to hold more  
22 hearings. I would like to thank the Department of  
23 Energy for complying with the requests and for  
24 taking the time to answer the questions and  
25 concerns from the people of South Mississippi.

1           The Department of Energy must do this  
2 project right or not do it at all. I will only  
3 support the project if the Department draws the  
4 water used to hollow out the dome from the Gulf of  
5 Mexico instead of the Leaf or Pascagoula Rivers.

6           Also, the Department must dispose of the  
7 brine well south of the barrier islands, using the  
8 Naval Oceanographic Office, Stennis Space Center to  
9 determine the best method of brine disposal, to  
10 avoid any harmful environmental impact occurring  
11 from the project in the Gulf of Mexico.

12           I support the creation of an additional  
13 Strategic Petroleum Reserve site in Richton, but it  
14 must be carried out with community input and  
15 minimal environmental impact. The people of  
16 Mississippi have the right to have their voices  
17 heard on such an important project that has the  
18 potential impact to so many. I cannot emphasize  
19 this strongly enough.

20           If these conditions are met, I will  
21 support the project. However, I am letting it be  
22 known in advance if the Department of Energy does  
23 not meet these conditions, I will not support any  
24 funding of this project.

25           Thank you very much.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MR. FELDER: I have a copy of the letter  
3 for the media if anybody would like it. Thank you.

4 MS. FALEY: The other elected official  
5 that we have signed up is Deborah Dawkins from the  
6 Mississippi State Senate.

7 SENATOR DAWKINS: Thank you. I am sorry,  
8 Mr. Johnson, but I had asked that there be a podium  
9 available for the citizens to use and this is not  
10 exactly what I had in mind. But I'm sure you won't  
11 mind if I do this, and if others want to use the  
12 podium. Sometimes it makes it easier, if you have  
13 paperwork.

14 I am Deborah Dawkins, State Senator from  
15 District 48. I represent the Mississippi Gulf  
16 Coast in the Mississippi State Senate. And I took  
17 an oath to represent all the people of Mississippi.  
18 And I would argue that this issue faces the entire  
19 state of Mississippi.

20 One, the Pascagoula River watershed is  
21 unique and important. And how it works -- I hope  
22 some of you -- I hope all of you after tonight look  
23 at the Nature Conservancy DVD on the Pascagoula  
24 called The Singing River: Rhythms of Nature. I  
25 was given a copy. It was narrated by Gerald

1 McRaney, a local boy. I plan to file a copy of the  
2 DVD into the USDOE's Agency record of this project.

3

4 Mr. Johnson, do you have an attorney here  
5 tonight? Is there an attorney with your  
6 Department?

7 MR. JOHNSON: No.

8 SENATOR DAWKINS: Well, the attorneys, I  
9 am sure, will tell you that you will need to watch  
10 this.

11 MR. JOHNSON: I have watched it.

12 SENATOR DAWKINS: You have watched it?

13 Very good. He has watched it.

14 My remarks will be drawn from the Nature  
15 Conservancy DVD, with apology to the scientists and  
16 the alligator farmers for any mistakes I make.

17 The Pascagoula Basin is an artery of life.  
18 It is one of the largest protected river corridors  
19 in the U.S. It is free to flood and recede with  
20 the seasons, part of a vast life cycle with no  
21 levees, no dams. It is unobstructed by man, so it  
22 floods out into the bottomland hardwood forest.  
23 The Spring floods are life giving. The back swamp  
24 has not been cut off by the river -- from the river  
25 by man, so far. The plant and animal species that

1 live in the Basin are adapted to water being  
2 present most of the year.

3 If we allow you to alter it with this  
4 proposed pipeline and construction of roads and oil  
5 tank farm, the entire system will change forever.  
6 Hundreds of tributaries flowing to the Leaf and  
7 Chickasawhay, which flow into the Pascagoula,  
8 developing a life-creating engine composed of  
9 streams, oxbow lakes, freshwater swamps, bayous,  
10 saltwater marshes, which drain into the watershed,  
11 into the Gulf. The health of every part of the  
12 watershed is dependant on every other part.

13 The North-South forest in the Basin is  
14 complex and vertically stratified, similar to a  
15 tropical forest. You can still see what James  
16 Audubon saw when you go out there. That is why it  
17 draws scientists and fishers and artists and people  
18 on vacation and brings our economy a huge boon,  
19 which we need in the state of Mississippi.

20 Over 300 species of birds use the Basin at  
21 some point in the year all around. It is a crucial  
22 habitat for migratory birds and supports up to 80  
23 percent of all of the birds found in Mississippi.  
24 Our migrating birds need a place to stop and feed  
25 and then go on. And I don't know where they'd go

1 if they didn't have the Pascagoula River Basin.

2 For example, approximately 200  
3 swallow-tail types are in the Basin during the  
4 breeding season. Swallow-tail types have a 50-inch  
5 wingspan, which means they are about that tall  
6 (indicating).

7 The forestry and estuary supports at least  
8 100,000 other life forms. The habitat is on par  
9 with anything you could find in Belize or Costa  
10 Rica or other tropical areas. There are huge  
11 deciduous trees. And the aquatic life is more  
12 diverse.

13 Graham Wisner and his family's company,  
14 the Pascagoula Hardwood Company, saved 32,000 acres  
15 in the Basin by selling it to the State of  
16 Mississippi years ago. This began the national  
17 idea of public/private partnership to preserve,  
18 conserve and restore.

19 The Pascagoula is a spot where man has not  
20 yet been able to mess it up. We need to take their  
21 example as a clarion call to fight to preserve,  
22 conserve and restore God's creation.

23 Now, this proposed project is unwanted,  
24 unnecessary and impractical. But besides that, it  
25 would be really difficult, if not impossible, to do

1 it because of the nature of the ground. Anything  
2 big and heavy enough to tear up the ground and dig  
3 a ditch for a 100-mile-long pipeline would just get  
4 stuck. There are mud holes out there. Anyone who  
5 has been out there knows heavy equipment can't  
6 operate out there. I believe the construction  
7 would be louder and worse than I am seeing on the  
8 presentations in there.

9 Ecosystems all exist in relationship to  
10 one another. The fresh water flowing out of the  
11 Gulf (sic) affects the Gulf. Because it is a  
12 healthy river system, fresh water flow helps the  
13 life in the Gulf. Fish species that no longer  
14 exist elsewhere still exist in the Pascagoula  
15 estuary. And you know I am talking about the  
16 endangered Gulf sturgeon for one.

17 The tidal salt water flow affects the life  
18 of the river and is dependant on the river. Once  
19 this is disrupted, man does not have the power to  
20 restore it; certainly not the Federal Government.  
21 This habitat cannot be mitigated. The Pascagoula  
22 is a critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon, as I  
23 said. What will the construction and water  
24 withdrawal do to these anadromous fish that breed  
25 in the river and live in the Sound? What would it

1 do to the Mississippi Sandhill Crane?

2           There are hundreds of archeological sites  
3 in the Pascagoula Basin. Scientists come from all  
4 over the world to research the Indian sites. What  
5 will happen to these? Has the USDOE complied with  
6 the applicable Federal law requiring a survey of  
7 Indian archeological sites?

8           And I know the Mississippi Department of  
9 Archives and History has not had an opportunity to  
10 do that. And even if they had the opportunity to  
11 do it, I can tell you for sure they don't have the  
12 money.

13           Mussels are an indicator of the overall  
14 ecosystem health. They are abundant here because  
15 the Pascagoula Basin offers a refuge to aquatic  
16 species, which as a group comprise 50 percent of  
17 the endangered species nationwide.

18           The Pascagoula Basin has not been dammed  
19 and fragmented and leveed, like other parts of the  
20 country. The parts that were not protected, we can  
21 go and see the damage there. The lands were  
22 invaded by non-native species. The water quality  
23 suffered in the '90s, but is beginning to recover  
24 and is stable, but precarious.

25           To paraphrase directly from the conclusion

1 of the DVD, the Pascagoula is alive and healthy,  
2 flowing freely, with the natural cycles of life.  
3 It will only stay valuable and become more valuable  
4 if we allow it to survive intact. It is an  
5 intangible resource that the citizens of  
6 Mississippi cannot afford to lose for a Government  
7 boondoggle.

8 The proposal is to remove fresh water from  
9 the river and convert it to brine, as I understand  
10 it, at a time when fresh water is of increasing  
11 value every day. The brine would kill the  
12 Mississippi Sound. The salt water would flow  
13 further north -- this is the salt water wedge we  
14 refer to -- further north due to decreased water  
15 flow. The road and general construction would  
16 increase traffic and associated development would  
17 cause pollution in the river.

18 This is a half-baked plan, poorly thought  
19 out, like the public hearing in Jackson after  
20 Katrina or the response --

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 SENATOR DAWKINS: As vice-chair of the  
23 Senate Committee on Environmental Protection it is  
24 my job to be here tonight and let everyone know  
25 that what you already know is right. This is a bad

1 idea, a horrible idea, and I intend to fight it  
2 every step that they try to take.

3 (APPLAUSE.)

4 SENATOR DAWKINS: As State Senator, I am  
5 calling on the U.S. Department of Energy to request  
6 that every Mississippi State agency and every  
7 Federal resource agency and the Corps of Engineers  
8 submit its entire file on the Pascagoula River  
9 Basin to the USDOE for consideration and computer  
10 models be developed prior to making a decision.

11 I am also today, right now, filing a  
12 complete file of every Mississippi agency and every  
13 Federal resource agency on the Pascagoula River  
14 Basin into the USDOE Agency record for this matter,  
15 quote, As is copied verbatim and in extenso, all of  
16 it.

17 I will follow up specifically to get the  
18 State's data for you, but it is now legally in the  
19 Agency's record -- your lawyers will tell you this  
20 -- all of it and you must by law consider it and  
21 include the data in your computer modeling, to be  
22 considered before any decisions are made, whether  
23 to go forward or not, on the Pascagoula River  
24 project.

25 I am also calling for an extension of this

1 public comment period -- April 29th is just -- it  
2 is very unreasonable -- to allow time for me to  
3 file a FOIA request and Public Records Act request  
4 for this data and deliver it to you for inclusion  
5 within your computer models. But you at USDOE can  
6 do that. And I am sure that these agencies will be  
7 willing to cooperate with this request for  
8 information, made in good faith, made with the idea  
9 of developing accurate computer models of the River  
10 Basin as it exists today and as it would exist if  
11 you decided to go forward and if you are allowed to  
12 go forward.

13 Your computer modeling must show how the  
14 proposed diversions will affect the ship channels  
15 at the mouth and in the Mississippi Sound and  
16 explain who will pay for correcting any shulling  
17 (phonetic) that occurs because -- once again, I  
18 promise you the Mississippi cannot afford to do it.

19 It needs to examine whether or not the  
20 proposed project would be consistent with, Number  
21 1, the Mississippi Coastal Restoration Plan; Number  
22 2, the plan by the Army Corps of Engineers to  
23 construct a series of levees and ring levees up and  
24 down the coast; Number 3, the plan to expand and  
25 improve the Pascagoula Harbor; Number 4, the

1 protection of the entire Pascagoula River as a  
2 critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon; Number 5,  
3 the Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge; and anything  
4 else I can think of before the extended public  
5 comment period ends.

6 Thank you.

7 (APPLAUSE.)

8 MR. JOHNSON: I want to thank you. And if  
9 anybody else wants to use the podium up here, they  
10 are welcome to do that.

11 MS. FALEY: I would like to call Julie  
12 O'Neil (phonetic) to make her comments.

13 MS. O'NEIL: I understand from the  
14 presentations we saw in the other room that the  
15 reason the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is being  
16 raised is because we have to have 90 days' worth of  
17 petroleum. And it's an international agreement  
18 that everyone -- every country has to have 90 days'  
19 worth of petroleum.

20 And I propose that instead of -- wouldn't  
21 it just be a little bit more strategic to lessen  
22 our dependence on oil? 3.5 billion would go a long  
23 way toward subsidizing conversion boxes for net  
24 metering, solar panels and windmills. A couple of  
25 solar panels after Katrina would have made all the

1 difference; a fan, a light, a television. And a  
2 good solar array could have operated a pump. We  
3 couldn't get any gas. We could also do things like  
4 encourage higher mileage in cars, tax gasoline.

5 But let's not kid ourselves. The SPR is  
6 not for the people. The SPR is for some kind of  
7 military accident. And that's not what we want or  
8 need.

9 Thank you.

10 (APPLAUSE.)

11 MS. FALEY: Thank you. I'd like to call  
12 Don Johnson of the Gulf Coast Research Lab.

13 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening. I am Don  
14 Johnson, a physical oceanographer. I have retired  
15 from the Naval Research Lab at Stennis Space Center  
16 and I am currently associated with the Gulf Coast  
17 Research Lab.

18 I have two concerns about the placement of  
19 the Richton site. The first is that it is in an  
20 area of very minimal alongshore subtidal currents,  
21 which are necessary for sweeping this stuff away.  
22 And the second is its nearness to the channels for  
23 entrance into the Mississippi Sound and an avenue  
24 for a lot of our species that use both the ocean  
25 and the estuaries for their life history cycle.

1 I have put a little thing over here. I  
2 hope you can see this. I guess you could -- can  
3 you see it in the back?

4 (COMMENTS FROM THE CROWD.)

5 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Harriet, do your  
6 Vanna White thing.

7 (LAUGHTER.)

8 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. What I did is a very  
9 simple fluid dynamasis approach to where the fluid  
10 would flow to. And it's just taking the -- I think  
11 the same current meter records, the bottom current  
12 meter record that was referred to in your report.  
13 And every three hours for the duration of this  
14 record, which is a Springtime record of about 45  
15 days, I released a point. And the diffuser site is  
16 right in the center. And just following it,  
17 tracing out the path of the parcels of water, it's  
18 not a matter of how much it diffused; it's just  
19 where the parcels would go.

20 You can see the large cloud. And it's --  
21 right now it doesn't tell you much about the  
22 density or the increase in salinity in it. But it  
23 tells you which direction it's going. And it's  
24 going right through the Pascagoula entrance.

25 All right. Let's take a look at the

1 second one. Do you want to hold the second one up  
2 over here? This is the same current meter, bottom  
3 current meter. I call it the Danelle (phonetic)  
4 Number 4. It's the Number 4 mooring site from  
5 Scott Danelle's thesis. And you can see the  
6 diffusion is kind of along the Mississippi barrier  
7 islands.

8 While she has got this up, I'd like to  
9 point out that we are in sort of a corner over  
10 here. It's a stagnation point for alongshore  
11 currents. If you take a look at the  
12 Louisiana-Texas shelf you will see that it is a  
13 wide-open shelf, with these sweeping, storm-driven  
14 currents that come across there.

15 Okay. Let's do the next one. Now, what I  
16 have done is I have compared the two shelves. What  
17 you see is the dispersion from the Bis Hill  
18 (phonetic) site. That is in black here. And for  
19 the same duration of currents -- one is the Spring  
20 and the other is the -- early Spring and one is the  
21 late Summer. And that is in black. And the whole  
22 scale here is from 200 kilometers on this side  
23 minus 200 kilometers. So it's 400 kilometers  
24 across the whole site. A big scale. There is a  
25 lot of diffusion going on in the Texas shelf.

1 Compared to that with the red -- what you just saw  
2 for the Richton site. So the diffusion on the  
3 Texas shelf, which has been calibrated and it looks  
4 like the diffusion is pretty well -- it's a pretty  
5 diffuse site, so there wasn't much of an impact.  
6 It's an order of a magnitude worse over here than  
7 it is in the Texas shelf.

8 All right. Let's look at the second  
9 problem and that's the nearness to the estuaries.  
10 You may not be able to see this very well, but I  
11 have plotted some of the current vectors of -- in a  
12 normal estuary there is an outflow at the surface  
13 of fresh water and an inflow at the bottom of the  
14 salty water. And this is a multi-port estuary, the  
15 Mississippi Sound is. You can see that the -- in  
16 the Pascagoula channel there is very strong  
17 currents coming in at the bottom. There is a  
18 little scale at the top, 10 centimeters per second.  
19 These are fairly consistent currents coming in at  
20 the bottom. So it's near a site where the entrance  
21 into the Mississippi Sound, or our estuary, is very  
22 strong.

23 The problem here is not just salt flooding  
24 the estuary. The problem is salt blocking the  
25 estuary from those species which want to sense the

1 fresh water outflow. And though they are near an  
2 estuary, it can change their behavior. Like the  
3 blue crab, female blue crabs migrate down to the  
4 entrance to the estuary and spawn on an ebbing  
5 tide. Their larvae go to sea for the next 30 to 40  
6 days. They float around at the surface, under the  
7 influence of the wind, generally during -- the peak  
8 spawning is during July. And the winds are blowing  
9 gently towards the -- ebb currents gently toward  
10 the east. In August they turn and blow them back  
11 toward the west.

12 Now, at some time in there they will  
13 descend to the bottom. They are tiny little  
14 things. They descend to the bottom, grab hold of  
15 the bottom on an ebbing tide, release on a flooding  
16 tide, and come in with the flooding tide. That is  
17 how they get into the estuaries.

18 The problem that I have with this is that  
19 they cannot sense that there is a low salinity  
20 output through that passageway. It is blocked to  
21 them and they don't know where they are. Okay? So  
22 that is one species of a number of species that use  
23 the channel. So it's way too near these channels.

24 Okay. That's my input. Thank you very  
25 much.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. FALEY: I'd like to call Pat  
3 Patterson.

4 MR. PATTERSON: Good evening. Pat  
5 Patterson, P-A-T P-A-T-T-E-R-S-O-N. I am a  
6 resident of Jackson County.

7 I have spent a good part of my life  
8 working on conservation issues on the Pascagoula  
9 River. I have hunted there. I have fished there.  
10 And I want to add a little bit to what Deborah  
11 Dawkins said and kind of put some historic  
12 perspective in this and then make a couple of  
13 points.

14 The early 1970s, the State of Mississippi  
15 and the Nature Conservancy entered into an  
16 agreement to buy the Pascagoula River Basin, 32,000  
17 acres of hardwood bottomland forest. And they did  
18 this with public money. They floated a bond issue.  
19 And it's the first time in the country that  
20 conservation bonds had been sold. As a result the  
21 Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Area belongs  
22 to the citizens of the state of Mississippi.

23 Since then, another 6,000 to 7,000 acres  
24 have been added. And the associated estuaries and  
25 wetlands make it one of the largest systems in

1 North America. And, as Deborah pointed out, it is  
2 relatively unchannelized and undisturbed. And this  
3 is important because it is a national treasure.

4 I want to make a couple of points in light  
5 of that. And I want to encourage DOE in this next  
6 year, as they do the supplemental EIS, to evaluate  
7 all the data. We have looked at your EIS and it is  
8 pretty slipshod. It looks like a cut and paste  
9 job. You don't have a lot of supplemental  
10 information in it, appendices, quoting data.  
11 Ms. Dawkins is fixing to send you a bunch of that.  
12 But in addition to the data, which can be  
13 interpreted any way you want to, I would like to  
14 see the Governor of the State of Mississippi and  
15 agency heads empower the scientists that work here  
16 to not only provide the data, but help you  
17 interpret that data, just like we saw this minute.  
18 That is very important.

19 (APPLAUSE.)

20 MR. PATTERSON: And I think that if you  
21 take one thing away from this meeting, what you  
22 hear tonight, it is that you realize that this  
23 river system is a national treasure and not a  
24 national toilet for you to pump and flush at your  
25 convenience.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. FALEY: The person I am going to call  
3 -- I can't read it very clearly, but I believe it's  
4 Lonnie -- and it either starts with a P or an R.  
5 It's either Lonnie or Lorrie. It's the second name  
6 on one of the sheets.

7 MS. ROBICHAUX: Is it Lorrie Robichaux?

8 MS. FALEY: Yes.

9 MS. ROBICHAUX: Lorrie Robichaux,  
10 R-O-B-I-C-H-A-U-X, citizen of Jackson County,  
11 resident of Pascagoula, Mississippi.

12 I am here to voice my opposition to the  
13 Richton Salt Dome project.

14 Have you really done an in-depth study of  
15 the effect that this project will have on the  
16 marine life in the Gulf of Mexico? I am just a  
17 novice on the environmental impact, but it boggles  
18 my mind that 50 million gallons of extremely salt  
19 water will be pumped into the Gulf of Mexico and  
20 not have a fatal impact on the marine life in the  
21 Gulf.

22 Balance of nature, what does that mean?  
23 It means -- if you remember years ago we had a  
24 commercial on television, Do not mess with Mother  
25 Nature. Marine life, crabs, shrimp, fish,



1 looking at people when I talk to them.

2 I am Fred Lemon, an Ocean Springs small  
3 businessman, small cattle rancher, small timber  
4 farmer, small mineral lease holder, but big on  
5 Mississippi.

6 I woke up at 4:00 this morning thinking  
7 about this. And I thought it's real simple, you  
8 know, and the Government, I'm sorry, but they don't  
9 get things real simple anymore. It's pluses and  
10 minuses. And they have too many minuses and we  
11 have plenty of pluses. And I am so happy to see  
12 this meeting room filled because I was at the last  
13 meeting and there was only eight people, Mr.  
14 Johnson, or 12. Nobody. Now, it was right after  
15 the storm.

16 I also helped fight and get out of here  
17 the atomic waste dump. They tried to go in this  
18 salt dome. What a joke that was. And they spent  
19 five billion dollars and they still don't have that  
20 stuff in the Yucca Mountains in Nevada where it  
21 belongs and where they agreed to put it. Put that  
22 up and then we can look at this.

23 But this is ridiculous from start to  
24 finish. I have got a couple of points.

25 No one has spoke about the potable water.

1 Our water supply for the Mississippi coast runs  
2 right around and through and under these salt  
3 domes. And if we lose our fresh water, we are  
4 going to be in a bad spot. And, also -- and I am  
5 not going to take you too long, but I do want to  
6 tell you too that I haven't talked to one person,  
7 not one person, who was for this crazy deal that  
8 they have come up with. So I just can't understand  
9 why the Feds keep pushing it. And they need to  
10 stop. And I am glad to see Gene Taylor. He should  
11 be here tonight, so he could get a feeling of this  
12 crowd.

13 I want to make one more point. I don't  
14 want to take up too much of your time. But I also  
15 own, as I said, some minerals. The Government or  
16 nobody, the oil companies have tried to lease these  
17 minerals in 30 years. We have got oil and gas here  
18 that we can stick a hole down and pump it up. And  
19 let's don't get this crazy deal going.

20 I do want to make another point, too, on  
21 this deal. They say this is going to be about a  
22 six-day supply and it's going to cost us three to  
23 four billion dollars. I'd say that's more like six  
24 or eight billion dollars it's going to cost us to  
25 do this. And it's ridiculous. And when it was set

1 up by Congress oil was about \$30 a barrel. Now  
2 it's \$110 a barrel.

3 I won't keep going. I have a lot of other  
4 points, but I won't keep going. But I thank you  
5 very much.

6 (APPLAUSE.)

7 MS. FALEY: James Newman.

8 MR. NOONAN: I am James Newman. I am from  
9 George County. That's where all our fresh water  
10 comes from. I've been on the Pascagoula River and  
11 in the Pascagoula River Basin probably for the last  
12 44 or 45 years. If you ever ate catfish in the  
13 late '60s and the early '70s at Mississippi Coffee  
14 Pot in Lucedale, I probably caught them. And that  
15 is another story.

16 But we could catch catfish in the daytime  
17 and walk down on the edge of the sandbar and catch  
18 these freshwater shrimp, which only two rivers in  
19 the United States have, and fix them for supper.  
20 If you suck all that water out of the Pascagoula  
21 River, they are going to drown.

22 Back in the '60s there was a group of us  
23 commercial fishermen that kept water level charts.  
24 And the only information we could get was from  
25 Maryland. And we kept those charts on the rise and

1 the fall of the Pascagoula River for about seven  
2 years. I don't have them now. Billy had them and  
3 he's dead now. But there was two constants you  
4 could always depend on in the Pascagoula River, you  
5 would have flood water in the Spring and you would  
6 have a low point water in the Fall. Those  
7 constants have changed a little bit over the last  
8 few years. We haven't had the floods in the Spring  
9 that we have had. But we have had the low waters  
10 that we have always had. And the last two years  
11 they have even been lower than what they have been  
12 in the past.

13 And the other day I saw on television  
14 where you said that taking 50 million gallons of  
15 water a day out of the Pascagoula River would only  
16 drop it one inch. That kind of talk scares me.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MR. NEWMAN: And if you add the industrial  
19 water system that is capable of pulling 25 million  
20 gallons of water right out of -- right over here at  
21 Cumbest Bluff at the same time and it all starts  
22 sucking that water out in October, what in the  
23 world are those catfish or the shrimp or all of  
24 these other things going to do?

25 I have seen a lot of things in the

1 Pascagoula River Basin that most people have never  
2 seen. But I have never caught a sturgeon. Never  
3 have.

4 A few years ago a man standing in the same  
5 position that you are in right now stopped and told  
6 us that they were going to put this industry in  
7 Perry County that would put a few jobs in our  
8 community and stuff like that. But a few years  
9 later that industry dried up the commercial  
10 fishing. It dried up all of the catfish -- as it  
11 went on. It took the jingle out of my pocket  
12 instead of putting the jingle in it.

13 That's basically about it. One other  
14 thing I'd like to say, though, Mr. Johnson. If I  
15 told you that the world was going to come to the  
16 end tomorrow, would you believe me? No. Why? You  
17 would say because you don't know what you're  
18 talking about. And I'm going to say something, you  
19 say this, by pulling 50 million gallons of water  
20 out of that Pascagoula River a day it will drop  
21 that level one inch, I don't think you know what  
22 you're talking about.

23 (APPLAUSE.)

24 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Jan  
25 Cambre. The speaker after that will be Alan

1 Taylor.

2 MS. CAMBRE: I'm Jan Cambre, C-A-M-B-R-E.  
3 I am completely opposed to the entire SPR project  
4 to expand its storage capacity at the Richton Salt  
5 Dome site. The environmental impact to the  
6 Pascagoula River ecosystem is not something I am  
7 willing to gamble with, nor are the possible  
8 effects on the Mississippi Sound from the briny  
9 salt water that will be dumped there. The price of  
10 freedom or security for our country should not come  
11 at the cost of the very land where we live.

12 (APPLAUSE.)

13 MS. CAMBRE: What is to be protected that  
14 has been destroyed? I cannot understand why our  
15 leaders would welcome this project as being good  
16 for Mississippi. The price for storing a product  
17 that is clearly running out as a fuel of choice in  
18 the long-term future of our planet makes no sense  
19 when compared to tampering with an ecosystem that  
20 has been in place for tens of thousands of years.

21 In this day and age when other states are  
22 arguing over water rights, how can the daily  
23 withdrawal of 50 million gallons of fresh water  
24 over a period of more than five years for use in  
25 making a contaminant be justified?

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. CAMBRE: Common sense sees this as an  
3 ill-conceived project. This is not the kind of  
4 development that our state needs. One would wonder  
5 who would really benefit from this plan as I cannot  
6 see any good for the people who live here.

7 (APPLAUSE.)

8 MS. FALEY: Mike Jenkins. And then the  
9 next speaker will be Robert Hardy.

10 MR. JENKINS: My name is Mike Jenkins. I  
11 am a citizen of Jackson County and I am opposed to  
12 this.

13 I am looking down here and it said: What  
14 issues would a supplemental EIS analyze? And I  
15 look at several things and it says: Water  
16 resources, including the quality and quantity. I  
17 think that has been addressed by several other  
18 people and I concur with their opinions.

19 Not only would it affect the wildlife, the  
20 fishes and marine, but it will also affect the  
21 ground water, our drinking water.

22 As far as the public health and safety, I  
23 have been impacted by what Katrina did to the  
24 people down here in Jackson County. I know that  
25 Katrina pushed salt water all the way up to the

1 George County line. I know it killed fresh water  
2 fishes all the way up there. And I don't see where  
3 there is anything positive in this for us.

4 As far as the economic impact, the few  
5 jobs that would be added in Perry County, as such,  
6 I am afraid there would be minimal impact. Chevron  
7 right now has 5,000 construction jobs going on. In  
8 a few weeks they will be up to 8,000. There is  
9 plenty of work down here for construction people.

10 If you want to pull in another 100 or 200  
11 jobs in Perry County, where are you going to get  
12 the people from to do this? They are coming from  
13 out of state. They are not helping Mississippi  
14 people.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MR. JENKINS: In conclusion, I am in  
17 opposition to this. I appreciate some of the fine  
18 comments that have been made and thank you for this  
19 opportunity.

20 (APPLAUSE.)

21 MS. FALEY: Robert Hardy is next, followed  
22 by Dr. Saeed Mulkana.

23 MR. HARDY: Good evening. Robert Hardy.  
24 I am a citizen of Pascagoula.

25 I went away from 35 years and came back

1 here by choice. I didn't come back by choice for  
2 this. If it looks like a duck and waddles, it's a  
3 duck. This is a bad idea. It's a bureaucratic  
4 boondoggle to support big oil.

5 I want to talk briefly about a couple of  
6 options. Our Governor, our distinguished Governor  
7 has a lobbying company in Washington, D.C. The  
8 vice president of that organization is the former  
9 chairman or the chief of staff of the Department of  
10 Energy. Over the last three years Barbour's  
11 lobbying group has been paid 3.2 million dollars by  
12 the American Pipeline Association, the Indonesian  
13 Oil Tankers Association, the largest single oil  
14 broker in Amsterdam, plus three other petrochemical  
15 companies. Conflict of interest. He supports this  
16 boondoggle.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MR. HARDY: Number 2, when we had the Arab  
19 oil embargo in 1973, in the Jimmy Carter era, the  
20 knee jerk of Congress was to pass legislation and  
21 fund the Department of Energy. And just doing a  
22 rough guess, the Department of Energy has been  
23 funded well in excess of 80 million dollars, at a  
24 minimum. And what do we have for it after 25  
25 years? No energy policy. Right now the best they

1 can do through Congress is take oil out of the  
2 ground, pipe it up to Richton and put it back in  
3 the ground. That's brilliant.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MR. HARDY: The nuclear energy program for  
6 electricity is 25 years behind the curve. Hell, if  
7 -- with all due respect to the Estabrooks, and I  
8 love you guys, I can go buy a Hummer tomorrow and  
9 get eight miles to the gallon. Brilliant from the  
10 Department of Energy.

11 We are looking at a government  
12 bureaucracy. And you, good folks, I am sure you  
13 are getting a paycheck and you're hoping that you  
14 can get out of here alive and go get your  
15 retirement. This is a debacle, folks. It is a  
16 political boondoggle.

17 Let's look at the facts. The strategic  
18 oil program at Richton, if it has 164 million  
19 barrels of oil, will give us 57 days' supply. That  
20 is about one-half of 20 percent of the imported oil  
21 coming from abroad. Who benefits? The oil  
22 companies don't have to put up six billion dollars  
23 of infrastructure to store the crude oil. We get  
24 the honor of paying for it. They get to draw it  
25 down in a crisis. And then they are going to send

1 it down here to Chevron to refine it. And we get  
2 to pay four or five dollars a gallon while their  
3 profits go up 300 percent over the last 24 months.  
4 Chevron made 27 billion dollars after tax, cash  
5 profit. This is a paid, bought for, done deal, big  
6 politics, big money, big lobbyist. Our Governor  
7 should be arrested for malfeasance.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MR. HARDY: One last point. We have the  
10 dubious honor in this county of having the highest  
11 incidence of cancer and cancer death rate. We are  
12 in the top ten percent of 1,371 counties in  
13 America. Our industries locally have permits  
14 through the DEQ with rubber stamped hearings. And  
15 since 1994, through 2006, our local industries, by  
16 permit, have discharged, and they have reported to  
17 EPA, one billion five hundred and forty million  
18 pounds of known carcinogens. It just so happens  
19 that Jackson County has the highest incidence of  
20 cancer in America. Mississippi is the second  
21 highest state on America in the cancer incidence  
22 rate. And we are 147 percent higher than  
23 Mississippi.

24 It's not enough that government agencies  
25 are killing off our citizens at the rate of one

1 person dying of cancer every day and a half in  
2 Jackson County. And we only have 130,000 people  
3 here. Every day and a half a person dies of  
4 cancer. It may be coincidental. I don't think so.  
5 I think it's tied to the carcinogens. In 2006,  
6 there was four million six hundred thousand pounds,  
7 39.7 pounds of carcinogens for every man, woman and  
8 child. It's not enough to kill us off. Hell,  
9 let's kill off the wildlife in the Pascagoula and  
10 the Gulf of Mexico.

11 (APPLAUSE.)

12 MS. FALEY: After Dr. Mulkana will be  
13 Sarah Barnes.

14 DR. MULKANA: My name is Saeed Mulkana. I  
15 am an ecologist. I have my Ph.D. from Gulf Coast  
16 Research Lab. I was the first one to do Ph.D. from  
17 there. I have lived here for 43 years and I love  
18 Mississippi. And I am going to live here for the  
19 rest of my life. And I am concerned about this  
20 project.

21 I need to remind you, you change the  
22 environment if something happens. The amount of  
23 oil that is going to be stored in the Richton Salt  
24 Dome and the -- just think about if something  
25 happens and -- God forsaken (sic), if something

1 were to happen. And my information is there would  
2 be 150 billion gallons of oil being stored. And  
3 that is a mind boggling figure. And just think  
4 about that. What will happen if an accident  
5 happens? And I hope it never happens that way.  
6 The Mississippi beds will be destroyed. The Gulf  
7 of Mexico will be damaged.

8 I am basically a planktologist. I am an  
9 ecologist and planktologist. My belief is the  
10 southern part of Mississippi is actually an area  
11 for the young fish and shrimp, crustaceans. I have  
12 solid work. I did my research here on plankton for  
13 almost two years and I have publications here from  
14 research.

15 Any time -- (inaudible), especially when  
16 we were pumped with a great deal of brine. If you  
17 see it like that, but in this -- in Texas, in  
18 Laguna Padre (phonetic), there is a very big  
19 lagoon. Water dumps from the Gulf of Mexico only  
20 with the high tide. The factor there is  
21 evaporation. The salinity there is fairly high.  
22 What lives there in that lake? Nothing, except  
23 brine shrimp. And that is what is going to happen  
24 up here.

25 If we pump 50 million from the Pascagoula

1 River and the -- pumping into the Gulf and then the  
2 brine is dumped out there, close to out there, it's  
3 going to increase the salinity. Any time you  
4 change the water, any factor, the whole ecosystem  
5 changes.

6 We have here the anagomous species of fish  
7 and crustaceans that go upstream to spawn or lay  
8 eggs. And their numbers start coming down because  
9 they are supposed to go into the shallows and --  
10 area and feed there and grow up there. But if the  
11 water has become very salty, what will happen, they  
12 will all die.

13 Our shrimp population -- shrimp is very  
14 important in the state of Mississippi. Mississippi  
15 has already got the poorest state in the nation.  
16 We don't want to do all these things. We don't  
17 want to have poison --

18 (APPLAUSE.)

19 DR. MULKANA: The shrimp, the life is  
20 about eight months. They go out in the offshore  
21 area, but they go and they have to spawn, lay eggs.  
22 These eggs will stop coming in, you know. And by  
23 the time they reach here, early part of the thing  
24 will be Spring, they have to be post-larvae. They  
25 are about maybe half a centimeter long. They need

1 shallow water, warm and a lot of food there and --  
2 which is there already. We have this area of -- we  
3 have one of the best fertile areas in the world.  
4 Dr. Gunter now, who is deserved to be the father of  
5 the (inaudible), he said the area from Pascagoula  
6 to Port Arthur in Texas, he said the fertile  
7 crescent between them was the most fertile area in  
8 the world now.

9           And the species of fish that grow up here,  
10 the young come here and they live in this area.  
11 And then they form these standing populations. And  
12 year after year those fish populations is  
13 maintained. What is going to happen if they leak  
14 in water with the high salinity? The young will  
15 go. And what will happen next year and the next  
16 year and subsequent years? There will be no  
17 Mississippi -- this area will become completely  
18 stunted. And what is going to happen with this  
19 poor state?

20           We cannot afford to do these things, take  
21 off 50 million gallons of water every day. This is  
22 one of the -- the very source for water we have.  
23 And then the -- pump back the brine, highly  
24 salinated water? No. Any time you change the  
25 ecosystem there has to be something. We all stand

1 to lose a great deal if you allow this project to  
2 go.

3 (APPLAUSE.)

4 DR. MULKANA: Thank you for allowing me to  
5 say this.

6 (APPLAUSE.)

7 MS. FALEY: Sarah -- I believe it's  
8 Barnes. It could be Baines. Sarah Barnes or  
9 Baines?

10 (NO RESPONSE.)

11 MS. FALEY: Ron Schnoor from Signal  
12 International.

13 MR. SCHNOOR: Yes. My name is Ron  
14 Schnoor. And that is S-C-H-N-O-O-R. I am the  
15 senior vice president and general manager for  
16 Signal International. And I am responsible for the  
17 company's Mississippi operation.

18 Certainly there is clearly a long list of  
19 environmental issues associated with this project.  
20 And I'll start by saying I haven't been an  
21 environmental advocate, but this particular project  
22 has a lengthy list of things that I would object  
23 to. But that is not really what my objection here  
24 is tonight. It is specifically to do with jobs.

25 Our company is a very vital employer in

1 Jackson County. We are currently employing 2,200  
2 people and we have lots of opportunity to grow our  
3 business. We do service the offshore oil and gas  
4 industry. And we are also serving the defense  
5 industry with the construction of modules for  
6 warships; both very vital interests to our  
7 Country's interests.

8 That said, the DOE's consideration for  
9 locating a tank farm and an offloading terminal  
10 that would essentially take up forty percent of our  
11 real estate, displace potentially thousands of jobs  
12 that this county and community desperately need,  
13 makes no sense whatsoever, specifically when it  
14 would only generate potentially 40 jobs. But we  
15 are strongly opposed to the location of the tank  
16 farm facility and the potential devastation of a  
17 very vital business in Jackson County.

18 Thank you.

19 (APPLAUSE.)

20 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Kay  
21 Mihelich, M-I-H-E-L-I-C-H. And then after that  
22 will be Don Abrams.

23 MS. MIHELICH: Good evening. My name is  
24 Kay Mihelich, K-A-Y M-I-H-E-L-I-C-H, resident of  
25 Harrison County, Gulfport, Mississippi.

1           In a 2004 Washington Times article by a  
2 gentleman named Alan Reynolds of the Cato  
3 Institute, he wrote an article entitled "Oil  
4 Reserves and Politics". He points out that the  
5 U.S. Strategic Oil Reserves were intended by  
6 legislation not as a military petroleum reserve,  
7 not as a reserve intended for our national  
8 security, but rather as an economic reserve. In  
9 other words, as I understand what he is saying in  
10 this article, that when oil prices surge sell-offs  
11 or even a hint of a sell-off could be made from the  
12 Strategic Oil Reserves and these sell-offs could be  
13 at lower prices than the current market price.  
14 This type of sell-off would undermine, according to  
15 him, the stability of oil speculators who have been  
16 helping to increase the price of a barrel of oil.

17           He also states in this same article that  
18 during the period of 2001 to 2004 that the  
19 Strategic Oil Reserves have been increasing by a  
20 160,000 barrels a day. I'm sorry. I don't have  
21 the data for the subsequent time, 2004 to 2008, but  
22 it would be my guess that it's about or -- if not  
23 more than that amount. But the -- back in 2004,  
24 you might recall, that the cost of a barrel of oil  
25 was about 40 dollars a barrel. And if we are

1 continuing at 160,000 barrels of oil into the  
2 Strategic Oil Reserves, 365 days a year, at our  
3 current price I can tell you it doesn't take a DOE  
4 employee to realize that that is a lot, a lot, of  
5 money and that someone stands to make a lot of  
6 money from the purchase of that oil.

7 And that then brings me to my point and my  
8 question tonight. Who stands to cash in on the  
9 decision, on the plan to establish the Richton Salt  
10 Dome as the Strategic Oil Reserve? I believe that  
11 we need to call upon the Freedom of Information Act  
12 to let us know who stands to get rich by Richton.

13 The current administration, according to  
14 the article, has taken the position during this  
15 administration not to sell a drop of the Strategic  
16 Oil Reserves, except in the event of a severe  
17 disruption of supply. Well, perhaps that is why we  
18 are seeing the rising cost of oil.

19 Rather than address environmental issues  
20 first, I say let's bring backroom politics into the  
21 light. Let them be exposed.

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. FALEY: Don Abrams is next. And then  
24 after that, Eric Richards from the Gulf  
25 Conservation Coalition.

1 MR. ABRAMS: My name is Don Abrams. I am  
2 a Jackson County resident. It is A-B-R-A-M-S.

3 First of all, I want to make sure everyone  
4 knows what we are talking about here with regard to  
5 the volume of salt they want to dump in our  
6 backyard here. I'd suggest you consider a  
7 five-gallon bucket and about eleven pounds of salt;  
8 six and three-quarters of these boxes. You'll know  
9 when you have enough, when you can't dissolve any  
10 more.

11 Now, I don't think anybody in this room  
12 would let me dump that five-gallon bucket in their  
13 yard. I intend to ask Governor Barbour if I can  
14 drop it on the front of the capitol lawn.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MR. ABRAMS: Now, to envision what these  
17 people want to do to us, imagine ten million of  
18 these buckets every day, one from each of us in the  
19 state of Mississippi, one from every citizen in the  
20 state of Louisiana and one from most of the people  
21 in Alabama, every day. If you line these things  
22 up, they are about 12 inches across, they'd stretch  
23 from here to the Pearl River and back, plus all the  
24 way to the DOE office in Washington and back. It  
25 is an astronomical amount of salt.



1 you have lost my confidence. You have lost my  
2 faith in you. And you have lost my trust. I could  
3 cite examples of errors and omissions in this thing  
4 as long as anyone wanted to stay here. I will get  
5 you a written copy. And I am more than happy to  
6 forward it to anyone else who would like it. See  
7 me afterwards. It's going to be a substantial  
8 list.

9 I want to hit two of my favorites here.  
10 Earlier this week Mr. Johnson told the Sun Herald  
11 that since 1990 there have been six brine leaks.  
12 Six brine leaks, six leaks in this toxic brine  
13 solution that they are going to be pumping all over  
14 our state. A gentleman tonight said that there had  
15 been four in the last ten years. And I double  
16 checked that number with him. If I go to Page 3-5  
17 of the environmental impact study and look at the  
18 period from 1982 through 2003, there are 227 leaks.  
19 The gentleman tonight said these are from the sites  
20 all together. They are not. It says: Reportable  
21 brine spills from the pipeline systems at existing  
22 SPR sites. Pipeline leaks at existing sites, 227  
23 of them.

24 In the EIS, on Page 3-12: Based on  
25 historic spill statistics and measures that would

1 be in place to detect and stop brine spills when  
2 they occur, these estimated brine spills most  
3 likely would be of low volume, less than 50  
4 barrels. That is 2,100 gallons. Higher volume  
5 brine spills, while possible, are very unlikely,  
6 based on SPR experience.

7 The SPR experience is 227 leaks since  
8 1982. The largest involving 35 million gallons of  
9 brine; the second largest, 25.5 million. Yet, in  
10 the EIS, no environmental impacts were observed  
11 from each of these spills. You have the wrong  
12 people looking.

13 You have posters out there tonight that  
14 say research from Texas A&M and McNeese State, that  
15 says that the brine diffusers are safe and there is  
16 no problem. Since I saw that on Tuesday, I've done  
17 a little hustling. I've found some of the papers.  
18 I intend to find the rest of them. I have talked  
19 to one of those researchers and he howled when I  
20 told him what you had concluded from his work.

21 So what I want to know is, were you  
22 misleading us in the EIS or are you misleading us  
23 now, this week?

24 (APPLAUSE.)

25 MR. ABRAMS: The final thing -- I know I

1 am out of time. The supplemental EIS is being done  
2 by the same people, the same contractors and the  
3 same department that when they drafted this thing  
4 out put the diffuser in the ship channel. We have  
5 got 39-foot-deep ships coming into 40 feet of  
6 water, with a four-foot hose sticking up from the  
7 bottom. You know, we have got some rocket  
8 scientists on the coast, but there was no rocket  
9 science involved here.

10 The same people are doing the supplemental  
11 EIS and presumably those same people are going to  
12 do the environmental study. And presumably they  
13 are going to be involved in the mechanical and  
14 electrical design of this project. I have no  
15 confidence it is going to work and I am disgusted.

16 (APPLAUSE.)

17 MS. FALEY: Eric Richards and then Maxine  
18 Ramsay.

19 MR. RICHARDS: My name is Eric Richards.  
20 I represent the Gulf Conservation Coalition. I am  
21 a lifelong resident of Pascagoula, back fifth  
22 generation. My father is sitting in the audience  
23 and there were three generations prior to him. We  
24 know a little bit about Pascagoula.

25 First, I'd like to say that we do

1 appreciate the DOE coming down and hearing these  
2 comments. I think it is a very important step. We  
3 are looking very much forward to the additional  
4 steps of hopefully making some strong changes in  
5 these current plans.

6 Some hard speakers to follow. Some  
7 extremely good points have already been made  
8 tonight. So I am going to try to breeze through a  
9 few items that I had.

10 The Gulf Conservation Coalition has four  
11 very strong concerns about the current plans. The  
12 50 million gallons of fresh water per day out of  
13 the Pascagoula River system, an extremely bad idea  
14 from our standpoint, in a river that is already  
15 stressed very much to the max. It is one of the  
16 more pristine river systems in the country. It  
17 doesn't need to be stressed anymore. Huge  
18 potential impacts that.

19 Now, as I list the concerns I would also  
20 like to offer some alternatives, solutions.  
21 Instead of the Pascagoula River, I heard  
22 Congressman Taylor is favoring pulling it from the  
23 Gulf of Mexico. I would like to suggest that the  
24 water be pulled from the Mississippi River. A lot  
25 of people say that that is quite a distance from

1 Richton to the Mississippi River. It is not that  
2 much further if you consider that the pipeline  
3 already planned in this proposal, running from  
4 Richton to Liberty, Mississippi, will not be used  
5 until after the dome is filled with petroleum. It  
6 is used for distribution, in with the cap from the  
7 pipeline.

8 My proposal is that you make that line a  
9 little bit larger, large enough to handle the raw  
10 water intake, only add about 50 miles of pipeline  
11 over to the Mississippi River. You can eliminate  
12 the 30-mile line down to Merrill.

13 The Mississippi River flows, according to  
14 the U.S. Geodetic Survey, 600 times the average  
15 annual flow rate at that point in the river than  
16 the Pascagoula River does at Merrill. The  
17 Mississippi River would never notice that it lost a  
18 drop of water by doing that.

19 The second concern, you have heard a lot  
20 tonight about the brine disposal; an extremely  
21 large concern. I heard several from the scientific  
22 community talk about what could happen with putting  
23 out that volume. Don Abrams talked about the  
24 amount of salt in terms of gallons of that highly  
25 saline brine. It is 90 billion gallons, 90 billion

1 gallons.

2           Look right next door to us. Twenty-five  
3 miles from where that disposal site is, Mobile Bay  
4 has just lost its -- virtually all of its oyster  
5 populations because of a natural increase in  
6 salinity over there. A change in the salinity  
7 changed the ecology, wiped out the oysters. We are  
8 talking about accelerating that process here  
9 because of the saline going down.

10           Brine spill potential, I am not going to  
11 touch on that. Don Abrams did a good job of  
12 pointing out that the average spill at the existing  
13 sites was 282,000 gallons per spill.

14           There is a solution that will take care of  
15 both of those. Deep well injection. Getting rid  
16 of the brine by deep well injection. It was done  
17 at two of the four sites. It is proposed for the  
18 Bruinsburg site. That is one of the other options.  
19 It was originally proposed for Richton in 1992, but  
20 was taken off the table this time around. It  
21 eliminates virtually all the environmental issues,  
22 saves many miles of pipelines, and also the spill  
23 clean-up costs and restitution to the property  
24 owners.

25           The fourth concern, Ron Schnoor touched on

1 the fact that the tank farm and anywhere --  
2 anywhere in the Pascagoula area on the waterfront  
3 will take jobs away from this county.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MR. RICHARDS: Fifty acres will support  
6 anywhere from 500 to 1,000 jobs. We are going to  
7 give it up for 10 to 40 jobs, depending on which  
8 number you look at.

9 Move it inland. There is a solution.  
10 Move that tank farm inland. Put it in the woods,  
11 where you don't have to protect it from hurricanes.  
12 The cost of the property is going to be extremely  
13 less than waterfront.

14 Let me make one last point, please. Think  
15 about this project from a different perspective.  
16 What if there were a salt dome about 60 miles west  
17 of Washington, D.C., Alexandria, Virginia, and you  
18 needed fresh water and there is the Potomac River.  
19 You pull the water from the Potomac. You take the  
20 brine and you dispose of it in the Chesapeake Bay.  
21 Would anybody even consider doing that? Okay. All  
22 I am asking is, give Mississippi the same  
23 consideration that the people of Virginia would  
24 give to the same project.

25 (APPLAUSE.)

1 MR. RICHARDS: And I will conclude by  
2 saying, look, if the project has got to happen, do  
3 it right. There are solutions. There are ways of  
4 doing it. Let everybody walk away at the end of  
5 this project, whatever the outcome is, being proud  
6 of what they accomplished here. And whatever is  
7 done, do it right.

8 Thank you.

9 (APPLAUSE.)

10 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Maxine  
11 Ramsay. And the speaker after that will be Doug  
12 Adams.

13 MS. RAMSAY: My name is Maxine Ramsay,  
14 It's R-A-M-S-A-Y.

15 My objections to the Richton Salt Dome  
16 project, when it was first discussed, the project  
17 was going to have a deep well injection to dispose  
18 of the salt brine slurry. I realize that this  
19 would probably cost more. But environmentally,  
20 wouldn't this be more economical, in the long run,  
21 when you are looking at the overall picture that  
22 will result in detrimental effects to the  
23 Pascagoula as a whole, to the fishing, to the  
24 seafood and to the tourist industry?

25 Since it appears that Governor Barbour,

1 Senator Cochran and Wicker are so gung-ho to  
2 destroy South Mississippi, will you publish all the  
3 names of all of our senators and representatives  
4 who are buying into this money-making project for a  
5 select few? They are destroying the environment in  
6 South Mississippi, including the Pascagoula and all  
7 it encompasses.

8 Why should you even consider the Richton  
9 Salt Dome project when there is ample room to store  
10 it all in neighboring states' salt domes? And even  
11 the amount of oil proposed stored in the Richton  
12 Salt Dome will only last a matter of weeks and,  
13 most likely, days.

14 According to DOE people here, it will only  
15 last up to two weeks. What a waste of taxpayers'  
16 dollars in the amount of an area of 4 billion  
17 dollars. And before it will be over, it will  
18 probably be 8 billion dollars.

19 Will you take responsibility if the  
20 Mississippi Gulf Coast encounters a severe drought,  
21 such as Georgia is experiencing at present --

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. RAMSAY: -- if the Pascagoula is not  
24 able to supply water and give them their contracted  
25 water at the present time? You need to take into

1 consideration that the Pascagoula is supplying -- I  
2 think Chevron is taking quite a bit. And they are  
3 expecting to expand. You need to do your homework.

4 In essence, you claim in your report the  
5 minute salinity brine will not affect any aspect of  
6 the environment. Therefore, will you take the  
7 blame for the detrimental effects the high salinity  
8 will have on the seafood, fishing and tourist  
9 industry? Or will you push the blame off on a  
10 low-level employee, which usually happens?

11 I do not believe any of your reports on  
12 the few and minimal salt spills reported by DOE.  
13 Thus, knowing the salt spills will occur, and more  
14 than you claim, who will pay the landowners  
15 affected for damages to their crops, to the  
16 livestock and so forth because you didn't do all  
17 your research? Will you publish the names of all  
18 those who will benefit from your pipeline,  
19 including the land owners and the mineral rights  
20 owners?

21 Have you considered other areas to run the  
22 pipeline, such as the Mississippi or the Yazoo? Or  
23 would that not happen because of the old adage, not  
24 in my backyard, from the politicians and the  
25 powers-that-be who are supporting this debacle



1 flooded, you can walk from our yard straight to the  
2 center of the Pascagoula River right now because  
3 the water level is so low.

4 Two months ago this flounder -- we ended  
5 up with a flounder on our sandbar. We are 20 miles  
6 from the mouth of the River. So you can't tell us  
7 the salt water is not going to come up if you pull  
8 this out. People keep saying 50 million gallons of  
9 water a day. That is over five years. We are  
10 talking about billions of gallons of water. Not 50  
11 million; billions of gallons of water that is going  
12 to be taken out, along with the 30 million that  
13 Chevron already takes out.

14 Oil -- you can't pump oil in Alaska  
15 because of the environment. Today, on the  
16 Internet, North Dakota, it's got 400 billion  
17 barrels of oil in North Dakota that they are not  
18 pumping. But, yet, we are going to put 160 million  
19 barrels of oil in Pascagoula, or Richton, for 16,  
20 18 days? We have heard several different figures  
21 about that.

22 Another thing that Eric said, you can bet  
23 that if this was in the Northeast, Ted Kennedy,  
24 John Kerry, Chris Dodd, this wouldn't never happen.  
25 Our representatives have let us down. I am not a

1 Democrat. Believe me, I support all these  
2 Republican guys. But they have totally let us down  
3 on this, totally.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MR. ADAMS: This will have a far, far  
6 worse impact economically and environmentally than  
7 what this 160 million barrels of oil is going to do  
8 for us for 14, 16, however many days y'all say it's  
9 going to last, especially when we have got oil in  
10 Alaska you can't drill because of environmental.  
11 North Dakota, you can pull it up on the Internet.  
12 It's going to be announced some time next week. It  
13 was announced on the radio yesterday, 400 million  
14 barrels of oil in North Dakota that we are not even  
15 touching yet. There is a lot of other things we  
16 can do besides this. Y'all are going to kill us on  
17 the Pascagoula River.

18 Any time you would like to tour the river,  
19 you or some of these decision makers, call me up  
20 and I'll take you from the mouth of the river as  
21 far as you want to go. And I am sure there is a  
22 bunch of other people that would be glad to go with  
23 us.

24 Thank you.

25 (APPLAUSE.)

1 MS. FALEY: The next speaker will be Della  
2 McCaughan after Cynthia Ramseur.

3 MS. RAMSEUR: Cynthia Ramseur,  
4 R-A-M-S-E-U-R, citizen of Jackson County.

5 I submitted written comments, so I won't  
6 discuss those. You have those. But there are a  
7 couple of things that came to my attention and I  
8 just want to comment on in addition to that.

9 When you started the meeting tonight you  
10 said the purpose of the scoping meeting is to  
11 determine how best to conduct the EIS. And if you  
12 haven't already gotten that message from some of  
13 the other comments, it must be done more carefully,  
14 thoroughly, with more factuality than the first one  
15 was done. And I would also agree with Senator  
16 Dawkins and others, we have a lot of really fine  
17 scientists who have spent years studying on this  
18 river and in the Mississippi Sound. And I know  
19 that many of them were not involved in this  
20 process. In fact, the person who is in charge of  
21 the Corps of Engineers planning for the state of  
22 Mississippi didn't know anything about this  
23 project. The people who know these systems, who  
24 know the problems, were not consulted. That is not  
25 acceptable.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. RAMSEUR: Several instances in the  
3 other room, of going around the stations, people  
4 asked questions and the response of the DOE  
5 representatives was, well, we'll have to do more  
6 detailed studies. I am thinking that that is the  
7 EIS. And they didn't do them in the first one and  
8 I really don't have a lot of confidence that that  
9 is going to happen in the second one. I'm very  
10 concerned.

11 And then, finally, one thing that has not  
12 been addressed and I'll just bring this up. And  
13 I'd ask you to add this to the economic  
14 considerations of the study. The original EIS does  
15 not provide an adequate cost-benefit analysis for  
16 the Richton Salt Dome project. Specifically, it  
17 does not address the economic cost for mitigating  
18 pipeline failures that run through critical wetland  
19 habitats. I've been in the business of mitigation  
20 for wetlands and streams for the last ten years and  
21 that is not addressed in here. It's a very real  
22 cost. The EIS estimates 56 failures, which could  
23 be hundreds of thousands of acres of damage over a  
24 period of time.

25 One cannot weigh the public benefit of

1 jobs gained and other economic benefits without  
2 weighing the full cost of mitigation from pipeline  
3 construction and pipeline failure. What is the  
4 cost? Who will be responsible for emergency  
5 stabilization, restoration, remediation design and  
6 implementation? Who will monitor and who will  
7 assure success of the mitigation?

8 Thank you.

9 (APPLAUSE.)

10 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Della  
11 McCaughan, followed by Robert Smith.

12 MS. MCCAUGHAN: My name is Della  
13 McCaughan, spelled M-C-C-A-U-G-H-A-N. I am a  
14 resident of Biloxi, Mississippi. I am no one  
15 important. I am just an old, retired  
16 schoolteacher, 80 years old today.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MS. MCCAUGHAN: And so instead of being  
19 out jitterbugging with my husband, by gosh, I  
20 thought this was more important.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. MCCAUGHAN: You know, one time I went  
23 to -- by the way, there is no use holding up that  
24 colored sheet of paper because I can't see it  
25 anyway.



1 people in the state of Mississippi, they are the  
2 fishermen. Do you know that they are going to pump  
3 the salt water about six miles, I think, from Horn  
4 Island? Well, if you come in right at the south of  
5 Horn Island, they have beautiful, beautiful,  
6 gorgeous *Donax variabilis*. And my nephew said  
7 don't use those terms. Well, I've got to let  
8 people know from outside us, hell, we have some  
9 sense. But anyway, *Donax variabilis* are the  
10 beautiful little gorgeous clams. And just right to  
11 the south of Horn Island you can find those by the  
12 millions.

13           So I brought some in. And I've always  
14 experimented with the things. And so I put them in  
15 some salt water from Horn Island and I put one  
16 little drop of food coloring. And I guess that was  
17 probably about one drop to a thousand drops of  
18 water. Something like that. Do you know  
19 immediately, when that little clam took in that  
20 little water with just that blue food coloring in,  
21 man, it shot that water out in an instant. So, you  
22 see, these animals are sensitive to any type of  
23 things in that water. And they would probably do  
24 the same thing with salinity differences.

25           Now, I ask, when that comes out of that

1 pipe, that salt water, that brine, my God, 300  
2 parts per thousand. Do you know what normally is  
3 out there in the Gulf of Mexico? 29, 32, 33, 36.  
4 300 parts? Now, I said, Well, how far -- how much  
5 of an area does it cover? And so, It depends on  
6 conditions. If you are a scientist you don't want  
7 to hear it depends. You want to know facts. Okay?

8 So anyway, they said, Well, we test mices  
9 shrimp and the silverside minnow. Two species, one  
10 a crustacean, one a fish. Hello. You are really  
11 testing for pollution. I would advise  
12 phytoplankton. What is that? The little plankton  
13 like the nice fellow up here was talking about  
14 today. That is a stupid thing, you take two little  
15 species. And they all have varying degrees of  
16 salinity. Two species? Huh-uh. That is not the  
17 way to do it, folks.

18 And then I said, Well, what is the  
19 temperature? Well, it's about 100 degrees coming  
20 out. Hello. 100 degrees would kill a lot of the  
21 phytoplankton and the little plankton that's out  
22 there. And you have millions and billions in  
23 really small areas. Okay, folks, no people from  
24 the Research Lab. No people out there are  
25 scientists.

1 I want to tell you something else. And  
2 you all know this. The islands have been moving  
3 for years. I have maps that show that. I have  
4 appeared before a Congressional hearing in  
5 Washington, D.C. And I said, I am here to teach  
6 you what every fisherman knows. And they listened.  
7 And I had charts put up there on that Senate and  
8 they were aghast at that. I said, No, I have to  
9 have that.

10 So anyway, our islands are moving. And at  
11 one time the island would move from east, you know,  
12 the sand, over to the west and build up and just  
13 travel. But now they are pumping it out, shipping  
14 it way out. And we are going to be losing the size  
15 of the islands. So anyway, when they are pumping  
16 stuff out -- that gentleman that got up here  
17 tonight, my God, he was brilliant. That scientist.  
18 You ought to be getting his autograph tonight.  
19 That is the kind of people that should have been on  
20 that committee, making all these darn decisions.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. MCCAUGHAN: Ms. Dawkins, I met her  
23 tonight. But I'll tell you one thing, next time  
24 she runs for anything, I am going to go work my  
25 tail off for her. What a brave woman Ms. Dawkins

1 is. God. And I bet you there is not too many of  
2 our candidates around here. But she appeared and  
3 she gave a speech that was good.

4 I had all these pages and really didn't  
5 have time to write a lot of information. But I  
6 will tell you, public opinion is a compelling  
7 force. And unless you do something -- I am too old  
8 to really fight and fuss and do things, but you are  
9 young enough to do it. So I would say to you, get  
10 you some buses. Get you some cars. Go up there to  
11 that Senate and sit right there and worry the hell  
12 out of them. And let them know --

13 (APPLAUSE.)

14 MS. MCCAUGHAN: And let them know that we  
15 are having decisions that still will say I didn't  
16 know anybody from Mississippi was that smart. The  
17 brain power I heard here tonight, I don't have to  
18 go all -- I had so many points here tonight -- look  
19 at this folks (indicating). But I'll tell you one  
20 thing, the brain power that has stepped up here  
21 tonight, my God, Mississippi is one of the most  
22 intelligent states in the nation. We don't have a  
23 lot of money. We don't have a large population.  
24 Poor things, we have only got six electoral votes.  
25 That's why I think they picked on us. They don't

1 go to New York. They don't go to California. They  
2 don't go to those areas where those electoral votes  
3 are big. So political -- stand your ground,  
4 Mississippians.

5 And I am proud to be 80 tonight and to be  
6 here and to listen to you wonderful, wonderful  
7 people. Thank you.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Robert  
10 Smith, followed by Spencer Garrell (phonetic). I  
11 want to remind people that we still have probably  
12 20 people registered to speak. And I'd like to be  
13 able to open it up to anybody else who wasn't able  
14 to sign up on the registry. So if we can keep our  
15 comments short, that gives everybody an  
16 opportunity.

17 Is there a Robert Smith who signed up?

18 (NO RESPONSE.)

19 MS. FALEY: Very well. Spencer Garrell.  
20 Then the next speaker will be John Maggard.

21 MR. GARRETT: I thank you very kindly. My  
22 name is actually Spencer Garrett, S-P-E-N-C-E-R  
23 G-A-R-R-E-T-T.

24 Professionally, I direct the National  
25 Seafood Inspection Laboratory for the National

1 Marine Fishery Service, which is under NOAA, the  
2 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

3 (SEVERAL PEOPLE CALL OUT THAT  
4 THEY CANNOT HEAR THE SPEAKER.)

5 MR. GARRETT: That's really terrible because I  
6 used to be a bosun mate in the Coast Guard and I  
7 could really belt it out. Now, I'm an old folk.

8 But I've been a life -- not a lifelong  
9 resident, but I've been along the Mississippi Gulf  
10 Coast for the last 56 years and a resident of  
11 Gautier for the last 35 years. I've been a shrimp  
12 boat captain and all that kind of stuff. I am a  
13 microbiologist and one of those scientists that the  
14 lady talks about. I don't know. I am certainly  
15 not as brilliant as those folks are. But I want to  
16 make several points tonight.

17 One, everything that has been said has  
18 been said. I do think, though, that we should all  
19 understand that while perception may not be  
20 reality, perception always controls reality. And I  
21 think that we all should take great heart tonight  
22 in terms of the perceptions and what we can  
23 control.

24 I would like to associate my remarks with  
25 Eric and others, and certainly Congressman Taylor,

1 that if this thing, you know, has to go through it  
2 obviously has to be changed. I would caution  
3 trying to pull water from the Mississippi River.  
4 You have to be careful what you wish for. Because  
5 that, in fact, is the colon of America and it's  
6 contaminated as hell. So I am not too certain we  
7 want to take that.

8 But secondly, certainly there could be  
9 other -- thirdly, there could be other avenues,  
10 such as taking the water from the Gulf of Mexico  
11 itself. Obviously something has to change.

12 I am quite familiar with the process, the  
13 necessary -- the need to have good and accurate and  
14 substantial EIS statements. And you have just a  
15 wealth of scientific expertise along the  
16 Mississippi Gulf Coast. And certainly I would  
17 recommend that you use that expertise, whether it's  
18 the Gulf Coast Research Lab or our universities or  
19 Stennis Space Center or what have you. And these  
20 people would be most helpful. And go to the field  
21 and go to the people that live here to truly find  
22 out, you know, what is possibly doable and what is  
23 not doable.

24 But another alternative might be -- and  
25 this is -- you know, don't kick me out of here.

1 This is -- nobody has ever thought of it or they  
2 haven't thought of it in years. I haven't -- in  
3 these public hearings. I want to remind you that  
4 the German Army under Hitler had fuel for his  
5 Panzer divisions, his tanks, for four years from  
6 coal deacidification. That's another alternative  
7 that if we want to try to separate ourself -- we  
8 have coal for like, what, 100,000 years? And the  
9 formula theoretically has been lost and it is a  
10 high-pressure technique and it is very labor  
11 intensive. And the last time I checked an  
12 economist said, well, goodness, gasoline would have  
13 to be selling for two dollars a gallon.

14 (LAUGHTER.)

15 MR. GARRETT: So there you are. But in  
16 closing, I wish you all well. I understand this is  
17 difficult for you on that side of the table  
18 (indicating). I have been there, by the way. But  
19 listen to the citizens here. We -- it's  
20 unfortunate -- we are all Katrina victims. We  
21 didn't have a chance -- I had six feet of water in  
22 my house, just like everybody did in their house.  
23 And we didn't really have time to come to a hearing  
24 back in those days. But this certainly has to be  
25 rethought. And if it has to go down, then it has

1 to go down in a manner that is acceptable to all of  
2 us.

3 Thank you very kindly.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MS. FALEY: John Maggard. And then B.G.  
6 Thompson from the Organized Seafood Association.

7 MR. MAGGARD: I am John Maggard,  
8 M-A-G-G-A-R-D. I am also a voting citizen of  
9 Jackson County.

10 Now, I do not have any prepared facts and  
11 figures, but I do want it on record that I am  
12 against this proposal. I had people tell me today  
13 what they did in Texas and what they've done in  
14 Louisiana. And I am here to tell you I couldn't  
15 care less what they did in Texas or Louisiana. I  
16 don't know of anybody here that could care less  
17 what they did.

18 That's my feeling on it. Thank you.

19 (APPLAUSE.)

20 MS. FALEY: B.G. Thompson from the  
21 Organized Seafood Association and then Jeff Grimes  
22 from the Gulf Restoration Network.

23 MR. THOMPSON: That is B, as in boy, G as  
24 in girl, T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N.

25 The Organized Seafood Association of

1 Alabama is located in Bayou La Batre, just a few  
2 miles down the road. It represents the fishing  
3 industry, both the fishermen and the processors and  
4 the people who support that industry.

5 We have several concerns, a lot of which  
6 have already been covered here tonight. One of the  
7 things, like the -- talking about the estuaries, I  
8 would like to add that over 90 percent of the  
9 marine resources at some stage in their life depend  
10 on the estuaries. And anything that you may do  
11 that would damage only a portion of those estuaries  
12 is going to have an impact on the marine fisheries.

13 And the human population has increased so  
14 much in the last 50 years that this resource is  
15 being stretched to its limits. Okay? So we don't  
16 need to cause harm by something when it is not  
17 necessary, which leads me to my next point.

18 We are in a situation today where our  
19 economy is looking very, very weak because of the  
20 high cost of oil. Our seafood industry, our  
21 farmers are really in a hard bind right now, as to  
22 whether or not they can continue to work in those  
23 industries. And those are our food suppliers.

24 And I am not -- I am very disappointed  
25 that -- I know this is an environmental issue that

1 we are addressing here tonight, but I have not  
2 heard anything since this has been going on for  
3 pretty well a long time now, that the Department of  
4 Energy is not taking some steps to make sure that  
5 we do not keep escalating in this manner that we  
6 are doing right now, which could put a lot of  
7 people out of jobs. And I think that is something  
8 to take back to Washington.

9 Thank you.

10 (APPLAUSE.)

11 MS. FALEY: Jeff Grimes and then Avery  
12 Bates from the Organized Seafood Association.

13 MR. GRIMES: Hi. My name is Jeff Grimes  
14 and I am with the Gulf Restoration Network.

15 Before I start tonight I just want to  
16 point out, I've been to a lot of these different  
17 public hearings throughout Mississippi and I have  
18 never been to a public hearing with this many folks  
19 in attendance and this many people opposed to  
20 something like this.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MR. GRIMES: And I hope that everyone here  
23 from the Department of Energy tonight realizes how  
24 deeply and profoundly people are concerned with  
25 this project.

1           The Gulf Restoration Network is a Gulfwide  
2 conservation and advocacy organization, with  
3 members and member organizations in all five Gulf  
4 coastal states. We work to protect coastal water  
5 quality, fish habitats, coastal wetlands and  
6 estuaries, rivers, fresh water wetlands, cypress  
7 forests and habitats for threatened or endangered  
8 species. We have deep and profound concerns about  
9 the potential environmental impacts that could and  
10 would result from the Richton Salt Dome project  
11 moving forward as it is currently planned.

12           We are concerned that the Department of  
13 Energy has not conducted the proper scientific  
14 analysis that should accompany any project of this  
15 magnitude. Instead we have seen statements in the  
16 press that I read just the other day that this is  
17 an environmentally friendly project and that there  
18 would be no damage to sea creatures.

19 Unfortunately, I don't think that these statements  
20 even hold up to the most basic level of scrutiny.

21 I want to ask how a project where the DOE predicts  
22 56 spills of brine that could potentially kill  
23 local rivers and streams, how is that  
24 environmentally friendly?

25           The same lack of rigorous scientific

1 analysis can be found throughout the EIS that the  
2 DOE completed. For example, the claim that the  
3 brine would dissipate quickly in the Gulf of Mexico  
4 was based upon a very simplistic model that failed  
5 to consider even the most basic factors, such as  
6 the tides, winds, bottom contours and the complex  
7 currents that people tonight have described. We  
8 would like to see a much more thorough analysis,  
9 including the use of a three-dimensional model,  
10 that takes into account all of the aforementioned  
11 factors.

12 Another major shortcoming can be seen in  
13 the analysis of the proposed water withdrawal. It  
14 is impossible to say that a water withdrawal will  
15 not have an impact on the Pascagoula River without  
16 first knowing how much water you need to have in  
17 the river to maintain current fish and wildlife  
18 habitats. To date, no study has been done on the  
19 instream flow for either the Pascagoula or the Leaf  
20 River, the previous preferred location. So I want  
21 to ask you, how does the DOE know that it is not  
22 harming life in the Pascagoula River, the fish and  
23 the wildlife, the Gulf sturgeon, the yellow box  
24 mask turtle, the pearl darter? How can it make  
25 those statements? I have no idea. I think the DOE

1 must conduct an instream flow incremental  
2 methodology study, which is the type of study that  
3 is necessary for this type of project.

4 In addition, DOE must answer the question  
5 of what would happen during a period of extended  
6 drought, like we have already witnessed in other  
7 parts of the South. Who would have the first right  
8 to withdraw the water? Would it be DOE, industry  
9 in Jackson County or communities that use the  
10 river?

11 These are just a few examples of the many  
12 questions that remain. Unfortunately, we don't  
13 have enough time tonight to raise all these issues,  
14 so we will be submitting a thorough set of comments  
15 later during the comment period.

16 Thank you.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MS. FALEY: Avery Bates and then Terry  
19 Saucier.

20 MR. BATES: My name is Avery Bates,  
21 A-V-E-R-Y B-A-T-E-S. I am vice president of the  
22 Organized Seafood Association of Alabama.

23 We have grave concerns about this project.  
24 Just a little salt goes a long way to destroying  
25 crucial habitats. Our oyster reefs in Alabama have

1 been destroyed by a little bit more salt. When you  
2 see total devastation of reefs -- where we used to  
3 produce hundreds and thousands of sacks of oysters,  
4 we are reduced from at least 300 working oystermen  
5 down to 10 from just a little more salt.

6           You say what does a little more salt bring  
7 in? It brings in the predators, like oyster  
8 drills. They multiply by the millions. They eat  
9 up oysters by the thousands of acres. I am an  
10 oysterman too. I have witnessed it.

11           You are getting ready to turn loose  
12 millions of gallons of salt water that is going to  
13 turn around and come right back up into crucial  
14 habitats for not only oysters, but crabs, shrimp,  
15 fish. And when you see reefs destroyed --

16           I helped remove oysters to plant back in  
17 other parts of Mississippi Sound. If you have an  
18 area with this increasing weight of this heavy salt  
19 water moving into these estuaries, killing these  
20 reefs -- the phylo maps (phonetic) that these reefs  
21 produce is through speckled trout, redfish, drum,  
22 sheephead. When you can't feed these fish from  
23 these reefs you are going to have depleted fish  
24 stocks.

25           The seafood industry produces millions of

1 pounds not only for people in Mississippi, but the  
2 people across this nation. You know, the  
3 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act, the Congressmen voted  
4 to say that it is a vital part, a good part. It  
5 helps this nation to produce seafood from our  
6 waters. If you allow this to happen you'll see the  
7 devastation that has took place in the state of  
8 Alabama by a little more salt water intruding into  
9 your estuaries. You are going to be losing jobs.  
10 A lot of our people had to leave the state. They  
11 have come to Mississippi.

12           You had the devastation of Katrina. We  
13 are building it back down here. Y'all are building  
14 it back. Don't let this cause further problems in  
15 the state of Mississippi. Katrina wiped us out  
16 too. We have got a bigger cut in Dauphin Island.  
17 This is where the extra salty water is coming in  
18 down there. But here you are going to do something  
19 that man can control and stop. Don't let this  
20 happen in the state of Mississippi. Don't let this  
21 happen to the food producing people like me.  
22 Hundreds and thousands of people along the Gulf  
23 Coast will be impacted.

24           We like our jobs. I am the fifth  
25 generation of commercial fishermen. I know some

1 people would roll over in their graves. Blackie  
2 Tillman. When I used to shrimp right out here in  
3 the Pascagoula River, I worked right by some of the  
4 other fishermen. And I know Mr. Frank Dailey would  
5 roll over in his grave if he heard something like  
6 this. He used to really draw a strict line on good  
7 conservation of the marine resources in this state.  
8 He wanted to see them prosper. He is dead and gone  
9 now. We need more Frank Daileys to stand up from  
10 the Conservation Department in this state. I know  
11 the Conservation Department wants these resources  
12 to flourish. Don't let this happen in the state of  
13 Mississippi.

14 I appreciate some of the knowledge that  
15 was imputed to the rest of the people. It is  
16 something that is precious to this state, the  
17 seafood. It is precious to this nation. The Gulf  
18 States Marine Compact, if you read this, Article I  
19 -- Article IV, you are not to allow the depletion  
20 or physical waste of our marine life. Don't let it  
21 happen in this state. Don't let it happen.

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. FALEY: Next is Terry -- I think it's  
24 Saucier. And then --

25 MR. SAUCIER: Saucier, S-A-U-C-I-E-R.

1 MS. FALEY: And then following will be  
2 Laura Bowie.

3 MR. SAUCIER: I have a short statement. I  
4 am a lifelong resident of Pascagoula. My family  
5 roots go back some 250 years. They were all  
6 hunters and gatherers and fishermen. And myself, I  
7 am in the marine industry. I've been 30 years as a  
8 marine engineer.

9 I'd like to read my statement, so I'll be  
10 quick. I am opposed to the project for numerous  
11 reasons. I find it amazing that the more I hear  
12 and discover about the project the more cause and  
13 effect problems come to light.

14 The first, most obvious issue, is  
15 degradation to the environment and the corridor  
16 from the storage area along the pipeline path to  
17 its terminus in the adjacent Mississippi coastal  
18 waters. No one can accurately determine the damage  
19 that will be done during the process of building  
20 and the operation of the project. This is a big  
21 unknown.

22 It's safe to say that the supersaturated  
23 saline water, which is 15 to 20 times the average  
24 salinity of the Mississippi coastal waters, will no  
25 doubt have a negative effect on the marine

1 environment in the areas of the saline discharge.  
2 But what happens when a leak or a major pipeline  
3 rupture exists? How quickly can this oil be  
4 secured? Is there adequate automatic closure  
5 valves in place that will restrict the loss of  
6 fluids before the spill is allowed to inundate a  
7 large area and destroy much of the plant and  
8 microbes that exist there?

9 For those who are interested in numbers,  
10 50 million gallons a day equal 579 gallons per  
11 second or 77.4 cubic feet per second flow rate  
12 for five years. That is a lot of water. And a  
13 major rupture in a pipe, can you imagine what the  
14 potential damage to the Pascagoula River system  
15 watershed would be?

16 We on the coast know all too well what the  
17 effects of salt water on our river and property  
18 are. I can't imagine what the effect of a spill  
19 would be that is 10 times more saline than the  
20 flood waters of Hurricane Katrina.

21 Has a cost-benefit analysis been completed  
22 that actually models all possible scenarios,  
23 including lawsuits from adjacent property owners  
24 when damage from construction and accidents occur,  
25 reparations to the environment, loss of land use,

1 competition for use of water -- municipalities and  
2 industries, such as Chevron, depend heavily on the  
3 fresh water from the Pascagoula River -- the loss  
4 of marine life that supports sport, recreational  
5 and commercial fishing industries and tourism along  
6 the Gulf Coast? What about the overall cost of the  
7 project? Five billion is the estimate. But like  
8 most government programs, this number will surely  
9 grow. It could easily double by the time the  
10 construction is complete. And these are only a few  
11 of the issues that should be considered in the  
12 cost-benefit analysis.

13 My last point is, if the SPR has to be  
14 done, why not use the salt dome situated some 65  
15 miles south of the Mississippi coast? It is  
16 located in -- some 5,000 feet under the ground and  
17 approximately 200 feet of water depth. This is a  
18 geologic structure, which selected, it could cause  
19 -- surely prevent much less in many ways.  
20 Pipelines that carry oil and gas from existing oil  
21 production facilities already exist. No fresh  
22 water from the Pascagoula River would be used. Sea  
23 water could be used instead. And because of the  
24 depth and the existing flow of the Gulf Stream, the  
25 saline water being discharged would be much easier

1 diluted and dispersed than the plan that discharged  
2 the water in the shallow waters of the coast. A  
3 rig structure similar to the ones that exist in the  
4 Gulf oil and gas operations could be erected and  
5 utilized very effectively to move and store the  
6 crude when needed.

7 In closing, it would be prudent for DOE to  
8 spend the taxpayers' money on seeking alternative  
9 fuel sources rather than spending the money to buy  
10 more of the stuff that keeps the country and the  
11 world held hostage. Rat-holing crude oil is not  
12 the answer. We need a better way. And we've seen  
13 those. Go out and be in front, trying to find it;  
14 not continuing down the dead-end path.

15 Thank you.

16 (APPLAUSE.)

17 MS. FALEY: Laura Bowie and then Jerry  
18 Stevenson.

19 MS. BOWIE: My name is Laura Bowie and I  
20 am a resident of Jackson County. That is  
21 B-O-W-I-E.

22 I just had a couple of comments on the  
23 NEBA process that has been used so far. And I  
24 wanted to say that I am just astonished that a  
25 Record of Decision, which is equal to a Court's

1 judgment, has been issued based on the existing  
2 EIS. It was very poorly written. And the public  
3 process was pitiful. And I can't believe that a  
4 Record of Decision, or a ROD, has been issued on  
5 that.

6 With that being said, I would like to know  
7 that the existing ROD has been voided in the courts  
8 and that a new ROD will be issued after the revised  
9 EIS. I believe this should be a revised EIS and  
10 not a supplemental EIS because the proposed plan  
11 has changed tremendously.

12 (APPLAUSE.)

13 MS. FALEY: Jerry Stevenson and then Joan  
14 Belote.

15 MR. STEVENSON: I am Jerry Stevenson from  
16 Vancleave, Mississippi, John's Bayou, Marina Road.  
17 And I am on this river several days a week sport  
18 fishing and playing around.

19 I am opposed to this salt dome project  
20 because of the environmental impact. And removing  
21 water from the river or the Gulf, you are going to  
22 impact the Pascagoula River. The people that made  
23 these decisions apparently have not been on this  
24 river, up in the bayous. You are going to destroy  
25 vegetation. You are going to destroy wildlife,

1 fish, marine life all the way down from Florida to  
2 Texas.

3           The water does not move fast enough to get  
4 rid of this salt, in any way, shape, form or  
5 fashion. We have tides in Alaska that move 25 to  
6 35 feet every tide change. We have got three feet  
7 here for a big tide. Your Gulf is very shallow.  
8 You can't move that much salt and dump it in there  
9 and expect it not to have an impact.

10           I fish for fun and sport. I am not a  
11 commercial fisherman, but I enjoy it. To watch you  
12 destroy these oak trees that are hundreds of years  
13 old -- the one at Long Beach is 500 years old and  
14 it survived Katrina. And you add this much salt to  
15 the soil here on the Gulf Coast and all those live  
16 oak trees are history. As far as the Cypress  
17 trees, they are dying all over the swamp now  
18 because of Katrina dumping excess salt.

19           Keep our wildlife and our Gulf Coast safe  
20 for future generations. Our years are limited, but  
21 we have got kids and grandkids coming along. They  
22 need to see this river unchanged.

23           This Pascagoula River Basin is very  
24 critical to all of us and the future of this part  
25 of the country. Let's don't do this project here.

1 Store oil -- we have got the Arctic Wildlife Refuge  
2 in Alaska and trillions of barrels of oil. All we  
3 need to do is use that naval reserve up there. We  
4 have a pipeline that -- Valdez was going to build a  
5 gas line through Canada, to the lower 48. Why  
6 store oil here at the highest price it's ever been?  
7 Economically it doesn't make sense to buy oil at a  
8 higher price. And five years from now what is it  
9 going to be when you are ready to buy it? 100  
10 dollars, 110 dollars a barrel won't touch what it  
11 is going to be five years from now. Spend this  
12 three or four billion dollars on alternate energy  
13 sources.

14 Thank you.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MS. FALEY: Next we have Joan Belote,  
17 followed by Stuart Montgomery.

18 MS. BELOTE: My name is Joan Belote,  
19 B-E-L-O-T-E. I moved down to Gulfport in '98 when  
20 I retired from the Federal Aviation Administration.  
21 And I love it here on the coast.

22 Last summer I went on the McCoy boat tour  
23 of the Pascagoula River. It was very interesting.  
24 I live on Fritz Creek and I have a little boathouse  
25 and a little boat. And I enjoy fishing. And I

1 love the wildlife. And when I was on this boat  
2 ride with McCoy, he was telling me that they were  
3 -- I haven't heard anybody mention this. But they  
4 are proposing to build -- I think it was something  
5 like a five-million-dollar or seven-million-dollar  
6 Audubon Learning Center on the -- right there where  
7 the Audubon Center is now, which is just a small  
8 house. And I got real excited about it, that --  
9 there is not very many of these Audubon Learning  
10 Centers. And the fact that we could have one here  
11 in Mississippi and how our young people could  
12 learn, you know, about the environment. And, you  
13 know, I have heard y'all talk about jobs and what  
14 this is going to bring. I am three years ahead of  
15 baby boomers, so 20 years right on is 78 million  
16 baby boomers. And lot of them are going to have  
17 time and money to do something like come and check  
18 out the Pascagoula River.

19 I went to Corpus Christi last month on an  
20 Elder Hostel birding trip. And the highlight of  
21 the trip was to see a family of whooping cranes.  
22 And the reason it was a highlight is a few years  
23 ago they had got down to 13. When we destroy the  
24 animals we are not going to even be able to clone  
25 one because there is not going to be one to clone.



1 to pump humus down around the roots to save these  
2 trees. And what is this from? It's from salinity.  
3 And now you are taking and proposing this. I think  
4 it is asinine.

5 It is going to increase the salt. We are  
6 here to protest it and I, as one, want to go on  
7 record as being against it. You know, I worked for  
8 you, Mr. Department of Energy, for all my life. I  
9 really did. I was in the insulating business. I  
10 was raised in diapers in the insulating business.  
11 And I am pushing, as the school teacher, pushing 80  
12 years myself.

13 And we saved hundreds of thousands of  
14 gallons of oil per year in fuel conservation. And  
15 from that I decided I wanted to get bigger and so I  
16 worked it from a couple of crews to eight crews.  
17 And I employed 33 people. And we became very  
18 lucrative. And we specialized, as the doctors did,  
19 back in the '60s. Instead of doing everything of  
20 home improvements, we decided that we would  
21 specialize. And so I could talk to you all night  
22 and all next week too about the insulating  
23 business. But from that, it grew into heating. I  
24 became electricating. I went to air-source heat  
25 pumps and then I went to geothermal.

1 I installed 3,700 homes from the fossil  
2 fuel industry to geothermal. And this is where I  
3 believe the Government should be looking closely.  
4 You used to. You used to have tax incentives for  
5 people that did this alternative energy. And where  
6 is it now? It's lost. But I'll tell you, you  
7 could save many thousands of gallons of oil if you  
8 would go back into the program and look at  
9 alternative energy.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 (APPLAUSE.)

12 MS. FALEY: Harry McBride and then James  
13 Tanner.

14 MR. MCBRIDE: I am Harry McBride,  
15 M-C-B-R-I-D-E. I reside on Bayou Castille. And I  
16 have plowed these waters, so to speak, for the  
17 better part of 40 years, not so much down here as  
18 up the northern regions of the watershed.

19 I have seen mullet 20 miles up into Red  
20 Creek. Okay. That means the salinity has gone  
21 that far up. And that is a tough thing to do with  
22 a structure that is like it is down here, that is  
23 as delicate as it is.

24 You take an inch out of the water, you are  
25 going to drop everything along this watershed, from

1 McDonald up in almost north Mississippi, Neshoba  
2 County, to Chunky Creek to the West Tallahala.  
3 Everything is going to dry up. An inch is a huge  
4 amount of water and it cannot be replaced. Once it  
5 is gone, it's gone. It is so delicate.

6 I have been -- spent many, many hours on  
7 canoes all over this watershed. And it is  
8 struggling. It is beautiful, but it has struggled.  
9 You take an inch out, it's going to kill it. There  
10 is no two ways about it. Okay?

11 I don't know who these people are who  
12 think they can come down here and destroy our part.  
13 We were preserving this years ago, when people in  
14 the other parts of the United States let industry  
15 completely ruin their rivers. And they are just  
16 now getting them back to what they were. We are  
17 not going to let that happen.

18 Louisiana sold out. Texas sold out. By  
19 God, we are not.

20 (APPLAUSE.)

21 MS. FALEY: James Tanner and then Terese  
22 Collins.

23 MR. TANNER: My name is James Tanner from  
24 Vancleave. I just recently retired from Texas and  
25 moved back down. And they are trying to take my

1 river away.

2 I hope you people understand the thoughts  
3 and the hearts of all of these people. When you go  
4 back to Washington, or wherever you go to, remember  
5 that -- you know, we have this for ourselves. And  
6 we don't want it taken away. We don't want it  
7 ruined. But the last ten years as I lived in -- I  
8 lived in Texas 35 years. And up around northwest  
9 Louisiana, northeast Texas, all the way down to  
10 Tyler, Texas, Vivian, Louisiana, Oil City,  
11 Louisiana, the United States Government has made  
12 the companies shut their oil wells down, to hold  
13 oil in the ground. But there is some that has  
14 pumped dry. And these oil wells that has pumped  
15 dry, they should be pumping oil back in those holes  
16 because they already have pipes in there to bring  
17 the oil back. It would be a no-brainer.

18 But when you come down here, trying to put  
19 oil in a place you are ruining my water supply. If  
20 that water pushes back up through the ground, water  
21 -- and this earth is honeycombed. And water flows  
22 from the northwest to the southeast. But if that  
23 water pushes back up into the water system  
24 throughout this county, Perry County is two  
25 counties away. And everything southeast of it is

1 going to lose their supply.

2           So I want to thank the people here tonight  
3 for pressing their say -- their saying about what  
4 they believe. And I believe that you are barking  
5 up a wrong tree for trying to take my river and my  
6 county and my system away. So think of other  
7 places, like Texas and Louisiana, putting oil back  
8 in those holes where they pumped from.

9   (APPLAUSE.)

10           MS. FALEY: Terese Collins and then Mary  
11 Blackwell.

12           MS. COLLINS: My name is Terese Collins.  
13 It's T-E-R-E-S-E C-O-L-L-I-N-S.

14           I think this whole process -- we thank you  
15 for finally having a public hearing, although it is  
16 a half of a public hearing. And we request that  
17 when you come out with the programmatic EIS,  
18 because that is what I am requesting today is a  
19 full-blown, programmatic EIS on this and all the  
20 projects the Federal and State government agencies  
21 are proposing for South Mississippi. It's needed.  
22 It's required. And we need to have it. But when  
23 you have the public hearing, we want you presenting  
24 the information on stage to the public, not in the  
25 divide and conquer section that you had out here.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. COLLINS: The format is for State and  
3 Federal agencies to do so because that way the  
4 public really doesn't have a clue as to what is  
5 really going on. And we can't get straight answers  
6 because the people standing at the table aren't  
7 qualified to answer the questions we posed to them.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MS. COLLINS: The Mississippi Gulf Coast  
10 has become known as the Cancer Coast. We don't  
11 need you to add to that problem. We have got to  
12 find solutions. And we hope that you help us find  
13 that solution by placing the Strategic Oil Reserve  
14 somewhere else. And we also hope that you find a  
15 way to do this in another manner. Putting it in  
16 the ground may not be the best way. It may not be  
17 the most economical way. And there has got to be  
18 other ways to do it. And you just haven't looked  
19 for it because politically it is not the thing to  
20 do.

21 Alternatives to building the SPR in  
22 Richton should be adequately considered and they  
23 have not been in your, quote, unquote, EIS. The  
24 EIS should also include, like I said, the multiple  
25 projects that are planned on the Gulf Coast. And

1 that would make it be a programmatic EIS.

2 The secondary impacts of these projects  
3 have to be considered and they are not being  
4 considered now. NOAA, CZM, the Mississippi Coastal  
5 Program, the Magnuson Act, all the rules and  
6 regulations that are in place to protect us are not  
7 being used. Or they are being used against us, if  
8 anything.

9 Our state agencies are being told by the  
10 Governor what to do. We can't count on the State  
11 officials and the State employees to do the jobs  
12 that they want to because they are told not to do  
13 it. We need the local scientists involved, but  
14 they have got to be independent of the Governor  
15 because they need their jobs. And we understand  
16 that.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MS. COLLINS: The terminal and the  
19 pipeline are prone to destruction by hurricanes, by  
20 human error, by malfunction and by sabotage. This  
21 is a solid, strong reason not to put this reserve  
22 at Richton or to put pipelines down to the Gulf  
23 Coast. There is no way on God's earth for you to  
24 protect it. And we can't expect humans to do so  
25 either.

1 I was told by someone out at one of the  
2 tables that that is the reason you chose the  
3 Richton dome and putting the terminals down here,  
4 is to get the dome and the salt -- the SPR away  
5 from the coastline, to protect them from a  
6 hurricane. Well, hell, you are not doing that.  
7 You are putting the storage facilities on the  
8 coast. They are subject to damage. You are  
9 putting the pipelines above ground in a lot of  
10 places. They are subject to damage. They are  
11 going to be flooded. There are going to be  
12 problems. You can't solve that and you shouldn't  
13 be putting it here.

14 So don't tell us this is a good idea. It  
15 is not. Go back to the books and look at this.  
16 And don't put it on the coast.

17 The cost-benefit analysis is pitiful. I  
18 was told that you didn't even need to do a  
19 cost-benefit analysis because the economics of this  
20 project really didn't make any difference. It  
21 wasn't part of the study. That is the most  
22 ridiculous thing I have ever seen in the 30 years  
23 that I have been looking at EISs. I couldn't  
24 believe the answer. You have got to do a  
25 cost-benefit analysis. You have got to prove to us

1 that the benefits of this project, as a taxpayer,  
2 are worth the substantial investment we are putting  
3 into it. And I don't think you can do that.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MS. COLLINS: I do want the independent  
6 scientists on the Gulf Coast and in Mississippi  
7 involved in this project. We have got thousands of  
8 them around here. But they have got to be  
9 independent of political pressure.

10 Our fresh water resources come from the  
11 aquifers that are directly around this salt dome.  
12 If this salt dome has been penetrated by pipelines  
13 or by oil wells or any kind of other structures in  
14 the past, it is subject to damage. The oil can  
15 leak. It can get in our aquifers. And then we --  
16 and I am from Harrison County. I am not from  
17 Pascagoula. I have friends over here. And I have  
18 friends in Hancock County. I have friends in the  
19 north here, Jones County. They are all concerned  
20 about our drinking water. Y'all don't seem to be  
21 interested in that or concerned about that. If the  
22 oil comes out of that system or if there is any  
23 kind of malfunction of any type in this system, our  
24 drinking water is subject to disaster. And how are  
25 you going to fix that?



1 arm, or the armpit, of the coast now. It used to  
2 be Jackson County, with the paper mill, with  
3 Chevron, with Ingalls. And they are all wonderful  
4 employers. We don't want to hurt them. We don't  
5 want to get rid of them. We don't want to stop the  
6 casinos in Harrison County or the developments that  
7 we have there. We need a diversified economy here.  
8 We need to be able to have jobs in all aspects of  
9 the economic spectrum. But what we don't need is  
10 for you to come in here and destroy that. We don't  
11 need for you to move this pipeline from one spot to  
12 another and subject the rest of us to the problems  
13 that are here. We don't need the brine being  
14 sucked -- or the water being sucked from the Gulf  
15 of Mexico now because somebody doesn't want it  
16 coming out of the Pascagoula because the problem  
17 still remains the same. You are sucking up the  
18 larval animals that our seafood resources depend on  
19 to grow and then you are sticking the salt water  
20 back out there. And you can't even prove that it  
21 is safe to do it.

22 The analyses don't jibe with what is  
23 reality. Deep well injection is not a solution to  
24 this problem because it will affect the drinking  
25 water. And there are other problems with that.

1 Out of sight, out of mind is not the way to go.

2 The Mississippi River is a polluted body  
3 of water. We certainly don't want you putting that  
4 in the salt dome. And don't even think about going  
5 there. But you really need -- the public here has  
6 spoken. This is probably -- please don't pick up  
7 the red card.

8 This is an unbelievable public hearing. I  
9 have been doing this literally for over 30 years.  
10 I am 54, I think. I don't remember. 54 or  
11 something years old. Sorry, Della. You are a lot  
12 older than me. But this is probably one of the  
13 best public hearings I have seen since pre-Katrina.  
14 And even those started being not attended because  
15 we had so many projects on top of us. And that is  
16 one of the reasons this one slipped by. But every  
17 time we turn around we are having a public hearing  
18 on some issue. And we are just being brutalized by  
19 having to go to these public hearings.

20 The Corps of Engineers has a coastwide EIS  
21 sitting over there. Is any of that EIS information  
22 in your EIS? And we are questioning that EIS  
23 because it was so pitiful it needed to be redone.  
24 And then Katrina hit. We have all been wiped out.  
25 I lost my home totally to a slab. I lost my rental

1 home totally to a slab. My business I am building  
2 back. I am standing up here talking in front of  
3 employers that potentially could stop doing  
4 business with me because I am making a political  
5 stand. And that doesn't seem to matter to any of  
6 y'all. But it matters to us.

7 And the citizens here -- this is one of  
8 the most diversified groups I have ever seen at a  
9 public hearing. This is what it used to be like  
10 here. And I was part of the committee that kept  
11 nuclear waste out of the salt dome in Richton. I  
12 want to know what in the heck the DOE has on the  
13 Richton Salt Dome? What is it about that dome that  
14 y'all want so bad?

15 When we kept nuclear waste out of Richton  
16 we had the Governor and every senator and  
17 representative in the state of Mississippi for it.  
18 They are for this project now, but I guarantee you  
19 we can change their mind if we have to.

20 Thank you.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. FALEY: Paula Caffey and then Oscar  
23 Eckhoff.

24 MS. BLACKWELL: Mary Blackwell.

25 MS. FALEY: Oh, yes. Mary Blackwell. I

1 am sorry.

2 MS. BLACKWELL: I am Mary Blackwell and I  
3 am a native of Jackson County.

4 I am very concerned and opposed to this  
5 project as it stands now. Since Katrina we keep  
6 hearing from our Governor, from officials,  
7 committees, et cetera, what a wonderful opportunity  
8 we have, a wonderful window of opportunity to build  
9 a better state, a better coast, a better county. I  
10 guess this is confusing to me because how can we  
11 have a better coast or a better state if we destroy  
12 our best resource?

13 I hope you will give your full attention  
14 and will pay attention to our concerns. You know,  
15 this project would not affect me, I'm sure, at my  
16 age as much as it would a lot of other people. But  
17 we certainly all have a big responsibility to  
18 protect the resources that we have.

19 Thank you very much for letting me speak.  
20 Thank you.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. CAFFEY: When you come back, if you  
23 would give us a podium it would be much appreciated  
24 by a lot of folks.

25 Tonight I am going to be three different

1 people. The first will be somebody whom I respect  
2 an enormous amount, a gentleman named Steve  
3 Shepard. He is coastwide chairman for Sierra Club.  
4 He could not, unfortunately, be here tonight. He  
5 also works for a living.

6 Since the hurricane there are many of us  
7 who are no longer able to do the things that we  
8 would like to do. We do the things that we must  
9 do. One of the things we must do is to stop your  
10 stupid project because there is no other word for  
11 this project other than stupid. Sierra Club has  
12 been fighting this project since the '80s. We are  
13 tired of fighting. What point do y'all not get?  
14 We don't need to store any oil. We need to make  
15 better, efficient choices for our projects.

16 This project needs to go away. We need  
17 you to take this to whoever your boss is. This  
18 project needs to go away. We have talked it to  
19 death. We have spent enough money on it. I don't  
20 know how many years it has paid your salary, but it  
21 is way too many. You need a reality check. The  
22 people who were working in this room beside you,  
23 they need a reality check. They can't answer a  
24 simple question because they are obviously  
25 concerned about their jobs. Why were we there? If

1 they knew none of the answers to none of the  
2 questions, why were we in a room next door from  
3 2:00 to 8:00? Do y'all get paid extra or bonus  
4 time? Those guys deserved zero today because that  
5 is what they imparted to people, zero, or a bunch  
6 of lies that they continued to tell.

7 I asked a gentleman about a study on  
8 hypersaline or brine -- and let me change and read  
9 my statement from Steve Shepard first.

10 This is the current DOE plan. It is sure  
11 to adversely impact an ecologically important part  
12 of the continental United States. That sucks. We  
13 are important. We have economic importance and we  
14 mean a lot to a lot of folks.

15 It makes the -- industrialization and a  
16 planned degradation, an unwise use of a region that  
17 in the long run could be developed into an  
18 ecotourist destination.

19 Endangered species are threatened in this  
20 proposal. And a Gulf Coast site is potentially  
21 threatened, an essential fish habitat, under the  
22 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act.

23 Considering that there are over 500 salt  
24 domes in the Gulf Coast area between Texas and  
25 northwest Florida, it is incumbent on the DOE to do

1 a thorough, scientifically justifiable study as to  
2 why the Richton Salt Dome is the best suited out of  
3 500 choices for the extension of the SPR. Just  
4 follow the money. There is nothing special about  
5 Richton. It is a site. You know, why do you have  
6 a fixation on it?

7           Clearly the DOE has failed to consider all  
8 practical alternatives and as such must complete an  
9 environmental impact statement which will include  
10 the number -- an extra number, which would be the  
11 no deal alternative. It is obviously the best  
12 choice, the no deal alternative. We don't need any  
13 part of it here. We don't need an oil storage  
14 facility. We don't need pipelines. We don't need  
15 you messing with our water. We don't need open  
16 loops coming out of the Gulf of Mexico. We don't  
17 need open loop systems coming out of the Pascagoula  
18 River. We don't need them out of the Leaf River.  
19 We don't need any part of the discharge anywhere in  
20 the Gulf of Mexico. All it is going to do is build  
21 up and build up until it kills off everything we  
22 have got, that Katrina left us, that -- besides  
23 NEMA, FEMA and you guys have all tried to kill us.

24           The proposal has serious ecological  
25 impacts associated from both the short-term and

1 long-terms perspectives. The DOE's current  
2 proposal does little, if anything, to minimize the  
3 environmental impact on this project.

4 Ms. Collins in a previous statement made  
5 mention of a coastwide environmental impact  
6 statement. I am requesting that the DOE acquire a  
7 copy. It is better than nothing. But so far what  
8 y'all had in your environmental impact was nothing.  
9 It wasn't even fluff. No specificity. And you  
10 can't make comments when there is no specificity.

11 History has shown how destructive oil  
12 pipelines are on our wetlands. And they have  
13 exacerbated coastal erosion throughout Mississippi  
14 and the Gulf Coast. This proposal will destroy  
15 hundreds of acres of wetlands directly. And an  
16 indirect impact from altering hydrology will  
17 further result in degrading wetlands and a loss of  
18 wetlands. As such, we assert the new pipeline  
19 route must avoid wetlands and be -- instead be  
20 directed along existing public or already impacted  
21 right-of-ways. If the cost analysis was not a  
22 problem, then y'all can do a much better job of  
23 picking out a much better site and location for  
24 pipelines.

25 Oil pipelines would be run in public

1 areas, through well-established roads in South  
2 Mississippi, already cut through wetlands. Those  
3 right-of-ways need to be used for laying down pipes  
4 for two reasons. First, to avoid creating a  
5 separate development scar through the wetlands,  
6 which would -- further cutting them up and doubling  
7 ecological damage. Secondly, a pipeline near roads  
8 can easily be watched for leaks.

9           Currently the oil pipeline is scheduled to  
10 be laid from Liberty, Mississippi to Richton,  
11 Mississippi and down to Pascagoula, Mississippi.  
12 If these pipelines follow the established highways  
13 that already traverse these routes, we have the  
14 least damaging option in a very sensitive wetland  
15 dominated region of our country.

16           We also assert that the recent 2005  
17 hurricane season was a clear reminder of the  
18 important role wetlands play in protecting  
19 communities from floods and storm surge, supporting  
20 healthy fisheries and wildlife habitats and  
21 promoting healthy waters.

22           Basically in encouraging the destruction  
23 of 200 to 1,000 acres of valuable wetlands, our  
24 State and Federal agencies must strive to protect  
25 these resources for public health protection and

1 economic prosperity and a healthy environment.

2 Furthermore, the DOE has failed to  
3 adequately provide evidence that the water must be  
4 removed from the Pascagoula River, a waterway which  
5 is recognized by the State as a scenic river and a  
6 system whose rate has already been shown to be  
7 threatened and diminished in recent years.

8 Instead, the Mississippi's flow rate is  
9 600 times the flow rate of the Pascagoula, so why  
10 not use the Mississippi River? The Mississippi  
11 River would never miss six million gallons of  
12 water, which is destroyed in the intake. You may  
13 even want to check out a survey on the plankton to  
14 see what effect it would have on plankton.

15 Needless to say, if the Leaf and  
16 Pascagoula Rivers are used over the objections of  
17 the Sierra Club, administrative action will be  
18 undertaken to determine the short- and long-term  
19 biological impacts they are expecting when water is  
20 pumped into the salt dome in order to haul it out.

21 Thank you, Steve Shepard.

22 And then I have two short statements. One  
23 is for a gentleman from Biloxi. He believes in  
24 population control as a way to reduce the use of  
25 our resources. He has a concern on the Richton

1 project. He is a retired geologist. His comments  
2 was about heavy waves and currents.

3 We have not -- in history on currents and  
4 waves there is a lot about what was lost during the  
5 hurricane, from the people that had it, which are  
6 old-time fishermen.

7 He is concerned that the water is -- the  
8 salt is not going to flush out; it is really going  
9 to keep flushing back in on it. The waves are  
10 going to become so heavy that they are going to  
11 change the flow of currents, the ship channel, the  
12 canal and the contour of the land. And he wants to  
13 know what, if any, information y'all have and hopes  
14 that this project not go forward, because it's a  
15 bad project, until you have some other information.  
16 And that is Dr. Oscar Eckhoff.

17 And then I, Paula, actually have a few  
18 statements. I sometimes comment on projects. And  
19 you always would consider past, present and  
20 cumulative impact. None of this has been  
21 considered in this EIS. This EIS is a joke.  
22 Whoever y'all paid your money to, you need to ask  
23 for a refund because they screwed y'all. We are  
24 not going to let y'all screw us. Okay?

25 Only in Mississippi do they have books

1 called Only in Mississippi. You need to check out  
2 the library. There are two books, Only in  
3 Mississippi I and Only in Mississippi II. In  
4 Mississippi we don't just get our pork, y'all are  
5 trying to get our salt with it. We don't need it.

6 (APPLAUSE.)

7 MS. FALEY: Ma'am, did you make those  
8 comments for Paula Caffey and for Oscar Eckhoff as  
9 well?

10 MS. CAFFEY: Yes.

11 MS. FALEY: And Steve Shepard?

12 MS. CAFFEY: The first comment was for  
13 Steve Shepard.

14 MS. FALEY: Richie Gaudet.

15 MR. GAUDET: Rodney. Hello. My name is  
16 Rodney Gaudet. And I would like to give you a  
17 little background. I am a lifelong resident of the  
18 Coast. I am not going to tell you my age.

19 The thing is, Mississippi is not a toilet  
20 for the rest of the United States. First off, we  
21 have already had nuclear testing underground, in  
22 which my parents lived within 100-mile radius. And  
23 25 miles under the ground they tested a nuclear  
24 warhead. That was a stupid idea.

25 Mississippi has the highest cancer rates.

1 You wonder why. You treat us like a toilet. Now  
2 you want to give us this. And if I poured this in  
3 that bottle of water up there, would that not be  
4 poisoning you? You can't drink salt water. You  
5 can't live. Nothing in our ecosystem could live.  
6 I know you heard from the nice school teacher that  
7 was here, it's all elementary. A fifth grader with  
8 a science project can tell you that if you dump  
9 this in equal parts of water you kill everything.  
10 And now I'm going to have to go tell my doctor that  
11 you are trying to poison me with salt.

12 You know, oil is not the only thing.  
13 Instead of building this dome, which is a stupid  
14 idea, take that money and invest it in a smart car,  
15 not a stupid car. Because, you know, this idea is  
16 stupid.

17 And I asked a question in one of your  
18 little booths earlier, I said, Why don't you haul  
19 out the salt and then sell it? And they said, No,  
20 that don't work very well because when you do that  
21 it cracks and it leaks. So are the other salt dome  
22 projects around the United States leaking and now  
23 you want to use us as an experimental toilet of  
24 hauling it out with water pulled from our precious  
25 ecosystem? This is crazy. I mean, this is like a

1 Simpsons cartoon. You know, Department of Energy,  
2 Doh. I mean, this is wrong.

3 And it's also a sin. This should be a  
4 sin. When you try to poison this amount of people  
5 with a project -- it's not bad enough that Katrina  
6 was wrought upon us. Now you want to do this  
7 project. And I don't know who is behind it. I  
8 don't really care. But it is bad for Mississippi.  
9 It's bad for my children. And if you're going to  
10 do this, please tell me now so I can go ahead and  
11 prepare to move because my real estate is going to  
12 be worthless. South Mississippi is going to be  
13 worthless.

14 And I have a great suggestion of where you  
15 can put your salt dome. There is a little ranch  
16 that is perfect in Crawford, Texas. And, you know,  
17 Haley Barbour can afford to move anywhere around  
18 the world he wants to, but we are not his toilet.

19 I prefer that this project be scrapped.  
20 Take that money and invest it in alternative energy  
21 forms. Hitler even invented a Volkswagen bug.  
22 Let's get real.

23 Thank you.

24 (APPLAUSE.)

25 MS. FALEY: Amy Gautier Turner. She is

1 gone? David Turner? All right, David.

2 MR. TURNER: Thank you for listening to  
3 all of this and thank you for giving me, speaking  
4 just for myself, an opportunity to say what I have  
5 to say.

6 You know, Jackson County, Pascagoula and  
7 the Mississippi River are already paying a pretty  
8 severe penalty -- we really don't know how severe  
9 it is -- from unintended consequences of a water  
10 project that took place about 50 or so years ago.  
11 The primary water supply for the City of Mobile  
12 used to flow down the Escatawpa River, out of Big  
13 Creek and out the mouth of the Pascagoula River  
14 into the Bay of Pascagoula. It now flows through  
15 bathrooms and kitchens of the City of Mobile,  
16 except when there is too much water up in Big Creek  
17 Lake. Then they open the dams and they flood the  
18 Porch Lake area and that area in eastern Jackson  
19 County.

20 Before that happened, people from that  
21 time who lived here were undoubtedly able to go the  
22 beachfront at any time and just load up on blue  
23 crabs in a couple of hours, a couple of wash tubs  
24 of crabs. And old timers would verify that.

25 I just want to read a brief statement on

1 the need to preserve the Pascagoula River as a  
2 source of fresh water. Preservation of fresh water  
3 sources is as essential to the well being of the  
4 United States as is petroleum storage. Ground  
5 water supplies are known to be depleting. Serious  
6 economic as well as health consequences are  
7 foreseeable as sources of the fresh water are being  
8 drawn down. Look at the impact of Lake Lanier on  
9 Atlanta. Look at the critical state of Los Angeles  
10 with respect to fresh water.

11 A strategic petroleum reserve is a good  
12 idea, but preservation of one of the last unspoiled  
13 nature rivers in the United States is more  
14 important. There are alternatives to solution  
15 mining that will do no damage to the ecosystem and  
16 are economically feasible, without the need to use  
17 55 million gallons of water a day for years from a  
18 pristine river system. Conversion of the clean,  
19 clear water of the Pascagoula River to brine is not  
20 a good idea.

21 Thank you.

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. FALEY: We have come to the end of our  
24 registered speakers.

25 MR. JOHNSON: Is there anybody else that

1 would like to make a statement? Please state your  
2 name.

3 MS. MIHELICH: Once again, it's Kay  
4 Mihelich, M-I-H-E-L-I-C-H, Gulfport, Mississippi.

5 In 2006 I attended a public hearing on a  
6 totally unrelated subject. It had to do with land  
7 development. And the land developer was encouraged  
8 and allowed to conduct his public hearing on, of  
9 all days, Mardi Gras. I want, for the record, for  
10 whoever reads these statements, to be reminded that  
11 in 2005 a number of us here in South Mississippi  
12 had other things on our mind in early September of  
13 2005 than to be in Jackson, Mississippi, which  
14 might have been a mistake because they really meant  
15 to be in Jackson County, Mississippi, to hold a  
16 similar hearing to what we are hearing tonight.  
17 And I want anyone who reads this record to be  
18 reminded that it's hard to think that this activity  
19 that is being considered is being transparent, when  
20 really the wool is being pulled over our eyes.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MR. JACOBSON: My name is Len Jacobson.  
23 That is J-A-C-O-B-S-O-N. I live at 802 Washington  
24 Avenue. And I was one of the few that addressed  
25 this board or this department when a hearing was

1 held two years ago at the LaFont Inn. We had a  
2 very small turnout due to the hurricane. And the  
3 circumstances were very, very unclear to a lot of  
4 people. The turnout tonight has been phenomenal.

5 At the meeting we had two years ago I had  
6 some legitimate concerns about how this program was  
7 being developed. I was very concerned because we  
8 had just been through the worst disaster that had  
9 ever been wrought upon our country. And to be told  
10 that, you know, a lot of our stuff was being --  
11 there were a lot of changes that were going to  
12 affect us personally was just a little bit more  
13 than we could handle.

14 I truly at that time did not know the  
15 proper questions to ask. The answers and  
16 assurances that I got from your department were  
17 wishy-washy at best. And now, two years later, we  
18 are seeing -- we are still getting the same kind of  
19 wishy-washy answers. And that is a shame. And it  
20 is a shame for us to expect that -- well, we should  
21 be able to expect to do better. And I am -- my  
22 heart is just soaring tonight for the fact that we  
23 have had such a phenomenal turnout for this area  
24 and the right questions have been asked.

25 And you have heard from scientists and

1 engineers that know about what needs to be done.  
2 And I am hoping you will take this to heart. And I  
3 am hoping that we will see some conclusions that  
4 are drawn. And I am hoping that this program, as  
5 flawed as it is, will either be dropped or  
6 reconsidered and improved greatly.

7 Thank you.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MS. CANNON: My name is Lisa Cannon and I  
10 debated on speaking or not speaking and originally  
11 chose not to speak. But as I sat here tonight and  
12 listened, I wanted to bring to light the fact that  
13 this other gentleman recently brought to light,  
14 which was the Mobile County water system. I am not  
15 a scientist and -- but I am a Mississippi swamp  
16 tromper. And I say that with every feeling inside  
17 of myself.

18 You see, I grew up in a little community  
19 of Ford's Lake, which has the Big Creek that runs  
20 through it and the Big Creek swamp. When I was a  
21 child my dad used to take us fishing on Big Creek.  
22 We ran that creek with a boat with a motor. I  
23 challenge you today to go up that creek with a  
24 canoe because I guarantee you the amount of water  
25 that has depleted from there for the Mobile County

1 water system has drastically affected that.

2 As I sat here and listened to the amount  
3 of water that would be removed from the Pascagoula  
4 River, I had to think, is that going to be the  
5 outcome that happens to the Pascagoula River should  
6 this move forward?

7 In addition to that, on a positive note,  
8 as a child growing up on the Belle Fountain beach,  
9 we would go down and I would not see a lot of brown  
10 pelicans. Today I do see a lot of brown pelicans.  
11 And I attribute that to the common sense of  
12 preserving and protecting our natural resources,  
13 which I believe is what we are here about today.

14 In addition to that, I don't know if you  
15 are aware, but Gautier is known for the birds and  
16 the birding. Now, I am not a big bird watcher. I  
17 do live in Gautier. And, now, I do enjoy the  
18 birds. But those birds depend on the natural  
19 resources from our ecosystem. They eat bugs. And  
20 yes, I do watch the birds fish. Have you ever seen  
21 one slip up a bayou and as it is sitting there it  
22 pops its head down and catches a fish? Well, all  
23 of those things would be impacted by what you are  
24 planning to do.

25 In addition to the fish being depleted, in

1 that regard, let's talk about our natural resources  
2 now. When we go fishing we are now limited as to  
3 the number of fish we can catch. We are also  
4 limited as to the size. If they don't meet a  
5 certain standard, we must put them back in the  
6 water. Again, what you are talking about doing  
7 will impact that even greater.

8 Now, let's talk about Katrina and the salt  
9 water that came inshore. And like the other people  
10 who have spoken before me, I challenge you to take  
11 a ride. Ride up north. Take a look not only at  
12 the fish that were impacted and the other delicate  
13 systems, but take a look at the trees and the  
14 vegetation. In my yard, all of my azaleas were  
15 killed. I am not a big azalea fan, but it was nice  
16 to have those big shrubs because it afforded me  
17 some ounce of privacy.

18 Now, as we looked at these graphs that was  
19 presented by the gentleman sitting over here and we  
20 saw how that salt water was going to impact and the  
21 ebb and the flow, it really concerns me to think  
22 that the vegetation, in addition to the things in  
23 the water, are also going to be affected.

24 Now, that was because of a natural  
25 disaster. We have no control over a natural

1 disaster because it is just that, natural. But  
2 this project that you are proposing could be a  
3 manmade disaster. And certainly we can control  
4 those.

5 In addition to that, I am also concerned  
6 in regard to oil leaching into our ground water.  
7 Now, I have heard how the salt dome will hold it;  
8 don't be concerned about that; it is very safe; it  
9 has all been studied. And, yet, this past weekend,  
10 I believe in Gautier, we had a collection of  
11 hazardous materials, oils, paints and whatnot,  
12 because we are so concerned about it leaching into  
13 our water. Now, I am trying to get a feel for the  
14 amount of oil you are proposing to store in this  
15 salt dome and the amounts of oils and other  
16 hazardous materials that were captured on-site here  
17 this past Saturday.

18 And let's talk about the six to ten miles  
19 south of Horn Island. You know, in the grand  
20 scheme of things, that is not very far. Because,  
21 you see, I live six miles north of Horn Island. It  
22 takes me roughly 15 minutes by boat to get to the  
23 island. And it's not a big boat. It's certainly  
24 not a real fast boat. It's just a little average  
25 21-footer. But I think, you know, that is really

1 not that far out. And you are proposing to dump, I  
2 believe I understood, water to a degree of -- about  
3 100 degrees, more or less. And I have to think,  
4 how is that going to impact our entire coastline?

5 Why not take the salt water, if you are  
6 going to do this, and let's run the pipeline out  
7 50, 100 miles out into the Gulf? Suck it from way  
8 out there, pipe it up north, turn around and pipe  
9 it back out. Maybe that would be less of an  
10 impact.

11 Let's also talk about permitting. Now, I  
12 know that with dredging -- and I was just told this  
13 today -- that it is going to take about four years  
14 for a dredging permit, typically, to dredge our  
15 waterways. Well, we need our waterways dredged  
16 because of the water that flows out. And it's  
17 going to take that long to remove the silt -- and  
18 might I say that is natural silt that was brought  
19 in by the hurricane. I really question this.

20 And I encourage you to listen to what has  
21 been said here tonight and take this to heart and  
22 digest it and respect it.

23 Thank you.

24 (APPLAUSE.)

25 MR. SKRMETTA: My name is Louis Skrmetta,

1 S-K-R-M-E-T-T-A. I represent the Gulf Islands  
2 Conservancy, Inc. We are a local advocacy group  
3 dedicated to preservation of Gulf Islands National  
4 Seashore and its surrounding waters. Some  
5 wonderful comments were made tonight. And I just  
6 want to add quickly that I am heavily involved with  
7 the tourism industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.  
8 Ecotourism is a growing industry down here in South  
9 Mississippi.

10 They talked a little bit about the  
11 Pascagoula and its importance to ecotourism. But  
12 remember Gulf Islands National Seashore is an  
13 extremely important economic tool for the  
14 Mississippi Gulf Coast. People come from all over  
15 the world to visit the wilderness islands, Petit  
16 Bois and Horn Island, some of the last undeveloped,  
17 pristine, unspoiled islands in the country. So I  
18 am very concerned about the dumping of these large  
19 amounts of salt water, saline solution near --  
20 closely to Petit Bois and Horn Island. And I would  
21 just ask that you really consider the impact to the  
22 National Seashore.

23 Someone mentioned earlier the Tatum salt  
24 dome. I was wondering, the Tatum salt dome was  
25 subject to nuclear bomb testing some years back.

1 And what impact did the explosions have on the  
2 Richton salt dome? And, again, someone mentioned  
3 the possibility of an adverse impact to our  
4 drinking water. And that is something that worries  
5 me a whole lot. And I wish you would spend more  
6 time on that area, making sure our drinking water  
7 is protected.

8 I just want to end by saying that the Gulf  
9 Islands Conservancy appreciates this public comment  
10 tonight. And I have made comments earlier, during  
11 the scoping phase, and would just ask that all  
12 previous comments be made part of Gulf Islands  
13 Conservancy's record tonight.

14 Thank you very much.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MS. CAFFEY: Paula Caffey. And I had a  
17 couple more things, just like some housekeeping  
18 stuff we need to be on for the record. We believe  
19 the Pascagoula River and the -- the Leaf, these are  
20 options, and we request that that be taken off the  
21 table as a viable option of where to move water  
22 from.

23 We understand that the Mississippi River  
24 has a lot of stuff wrong with it. It's got DDT,  
25 toxaphene and many other pollutants that don't need

1 to be moved around anywhere. We don't know how far  
2 you would have to go to get away from that kind of  
3 stuff.

4 The Escatawpa River, the Pascagoula, the  
5 low pH is a problem.

6 Most of you know, Sierra Club sued the EPA  
7 on water quality in the state of Mississippi. We  
8 have the -- I can't even remember now what all we  
9 did win. But, anyway, the DEQ, the Department of  
10 Environmental Quality, works with us to have some  
11 of the rivers listed as being nonusable from  
12 further pollution, until they come up with a  
13 program to get them back into a situation where  
14 they can be used again.

15 We know that NOAA, National Marine  
16 Fisheries had some meetings with DOT this week. We  
17 know that they are not happy. I don't think they  
18 are any happier with this project than we are. You  
19 know, we work really hard to take care of what we  
20 have here. I don't know that we have convinced you  
21 of that.

22 We expect you to leave here knowing that  
23 we expect you to take care of our stuff for us. We  
24 are not able always to do for ourselves. But we  
25 have learned through volunteers and working with

1 other folks, even if they are people you don't  
2 think you would want to be in bed with, that  
3 sometimes we can accomplish good things from bad  
4 projects.

5           We know that salt kills. I had a pet shop  
6 for 20 years. I can tell you what heavy saline  
7 does to water, to fish, to plants, to rocks, to  
8 metal, to cars. You know, there is not any doubt.  
9 So I think it is ingenuous of y'all to sit there,  
10 look us in the face and tell us that we are going  
11 to discharge high saline brine water, we are going  
12 to create hypoxic situations with no oxygen and it  
13 is not going to cause any damage to our fishery  
14 resources.

15           I would like for you to take this  
16 statement back to your people. In the first place,  
17 you need somebody new doing this EIS. Barring  
18 that, please don't come down here and lie to us.  
19 It makes you look stupid and not us. We have been  
20 dealing with the same lies for 20 years. Old lies  
21 are no better than new lies. You come to us, you  
22 treat us with respect, you treat us with courtesy,  
23 you treat us with dignity. But you treat it like  
24 it was your place. And would you let it happen if  
25 you lived there?

1           We don't have a whole lot left to take  
2 care of. But we do intend to keep everything that  
3 we have got, every gallon of water, every blade of  
4 grass, every fishery egg, every fishery resource.  
5 We are going to take care of what is ours. We  
6 don't need you to help us. We don't need you to  
7 take care of it for us. We don't need you to tell  
8 us how to do it. What we need you to do is to work  
9 with us, so you can get your project somewhere else  
10 done, without taking from us or without polluting  
11 us anymore. We are no longer going to stand for  
12 this kind of stuff.

13           Deep well injection has been recommended.  
14 I, like you, don't think it's a good place to have  
15 that done.

16           The mineral rights are an issue in this  
17 that nobody has delved into a lot. We know who the  
18 property owners are. We can find those. We can't  
19 always find who owns the mineral rights. For us,  
20 following the project of -- where the money is, is  
21 generally the answer or the solution.

22           I would like for MDOT, if they are aware  
23 of -- if you are going to buy property you have got  
24 to know who you are buying it from. If you are  
25 buying property and you are not getting the mineral

1 rights, then you are defeating your purpose. So  
2 it's ridiculous of us to believe that MDOT does not  
3 know who owns what they are attempting to purchase.

4 Another solution would be taking water out  
5 one time, recycle or desalinize it. I understand  
6 they have some portable desalinizers that they used  
7 during the war or on different military sites. I  
8 do know some private individuals that may would be  
9 interested in talking to DOE. They had done some  
10 projects in Mexico, at one of the centers out  
11 there, on some desalinizing.

12 But, you know, we can't afford to throw  
13 away 55 million gallons of potable water for the  
14 next five to ten years. It is insane. It is a  
15 waste. It doesn't need to be done.

16 And then a couple of more things, which is  
17 -- if cost-benefit is not a problem, I don't know  
18 what we're doing here. This is not a  
19 water-dependent project. It could be done anywhere  
20 in the USA. Past, present and cumulative impacts  
21 must be -- not can be -- must be considered. You  
22 cannot violate the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act.  
23 You cannot violate the Wetlands Coastal Policy Act.  
24 We need to include our coastal wetlands -- our  
25 impact statement for the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

1 We have highly sensitive spots that do or do not  
2 need to be considered as situations because of some  
3 management plan from the DMR. It needs to be  
4 considered utmost. You can't be rezoned and be  
5 moving this around. It's worked too well the way  
6 it is for years. And I hope y'all have a safe trip  
7 home.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MR. SNOW: My name is Terry Snow, S-N-O-W.  
10 I appreciate everybody coming out tonight and  
11 voicing their opinion. Y'all, I am just as plain a  
12 man as you'd ever want to know. You know, I am not  
13 elegant. I am not well-schooled. But y'all can  
14 see from the people that has been up here tonight,  
15 this project is not welcome in Richton, in  
16 Lucedale, in Pascagoula. It's not welcome in South  
17 Mississippi. And I wish that y'all would take this  
18 back to Washington, or whoever, and find something  
19 else to do with it because we don't want it. And  
20 y'all can see that.

21 I feel like we are trying to -- I say  
22 y'all, but the Federal Government is trying to cram  
23 something down our throats that we don't want. And  
24 I know the people. And we'll fight it, fight it  
25 like nobody ever has before, because this means

1 something.

2 Thank you.

3 (APPLAUSE.)

4 MR. JOHNSON: Well, first of all, I want  
5 to thank everyone for spending their time in coming  
6 here tonight. It has been very impressive,  
7 everybody who came out here to provide us with your  
8 comments.

9 I just want to say, you know, these  
10 comments have been received. We have heard these  
11 comments from you. We really appreciate you giving  
12 them. And it's our deepest need to do this  
13 project, if we are going to do it, in a very safe  
14 -- environmentally safe and sound manner. And in  
15 the meantime -- now, the next step is really for us  
16 to finish the scoping period and move on to a new  
17 draft EIS. But in the meantime, we are going to be  
18 working with both the communities as well as the  
19 environmental groups to really determine where we  
20 are going to go on this.

21 I want to make a reminder that the public  
22 comments are all due by the end of this month,  
23 April 29th. And so they can either be e-mailed,  
24 they can be mailed. We really would like for you  
25 to get all of your comments in.

1           Anyway, at this time, I would like to  
2 close the session. Thank you very much for your  
3 comments. Myself and my staff will be all around  
4 here to answer any questions, further questions you  
5 have. And thank you very much for coming.

6

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(THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

COUNTY OF JACKSON:

I do hereby certify that the above and foregoing transcript of proceedings in the matter aforementioned was taken down by me in machine shorthand, and the questions and answers thereto were reduced to writing under my personal supervision, and that the foregoing represents a true and correct transcript of the proceedings given by said witness upon said hearing.

I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the action, nor am I anywise interested in the result of said cause.

\_\_\_\_\_

RHEANNON R. MILLER  
ALCCR-503  
Court Reporter