

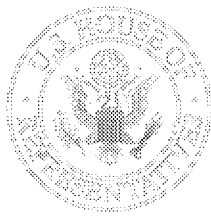
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

CHAIRMAN,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, SCIENCE AND NASA

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN WHIP



JOHN CULBERSON
7TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2161 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4307
202.225.2571
FAX 202.225.4381

DISTRICT OFFICE
10000 MEMORIAL DRIVE, SUITE 620
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024-3490
713.682.8828
FAX 713.680.8070

INTERNET:
WWW.CULBERSON.HOUSE.GOV

July 28, 2017

D. Lee Forsgren, Jr.
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Water
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 3223A
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Forsgren:

I am writing to ask that you review the decision of EPA Region 6 denying the City of Houston's application to use proceeds from a Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan to replace/modify bridges over Brays Bayou as part of the Harris County Flood Control District's (HCFCD) Project Brays flood control project. Since stormwater projects that have a water quality benefit are eligible for funding under the CWSRF, Region 6 should not have denied the City's request to use CWSRF proceeds for construction/modification of bridges related to channel widening simply because the project is also a flood control project.

HCFCD's Project Brays encompasses more than 75 individual projects and uses three major techniques to address flood risks: channel widening; bridge modifications; and the construction of regional stormwater detention basins. When Project Brays is completed, nearly 30,000 homes and businesses will be removed from the one percent (100-year) floodplain. The City's loan will be used for downstream bridge modifications integral to the channel widening work being performed by HCFCD over the next two years.

The City of Houston explained to Region 6, in response to a question about the water quality benefit of the project, that the channel improvements will lower the tailwater at the existing stormwater outfalls and enable the system to drain more efficiently reducing the frequency of sanitary sewer overflows. Despite this explanation, Region 6 determined that the project was not eligible for funding because it was "more about reducing flooding than water quality." The Clean Water Act does not, however, preclude the use of funds if a project provides other benefits besides water quality. Additionally, the Texas Water Development Board, the state agency responsible for administering the CWSRF, supports this project for the totality of impacts it will have in water quality and flood mitigation.

Devastating floods in 2015 and 2016 affected thousands of residents and business owners in the project area, thereby underscoring the importance of advancing completion of the project. Because of the urgency of HCFCFCD making the necessary infrastructure improvements to contain stormwater, I urge the EPA to reconsider its ruling and support Houston's loan application so that relief will come sooner, rather than later, to anxious citizens.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Gus Ashton of my staff at (202) 225-2571 if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Culberson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

John Culberson
Member of Congress

cc: City of Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner
County Judge Ed Emmett
Harris County Commissioners
City of West University Place Mayor Susan Sample
City of West University Place Mayor Pro Tem Wayne J. Franklin
City of West University Place Council