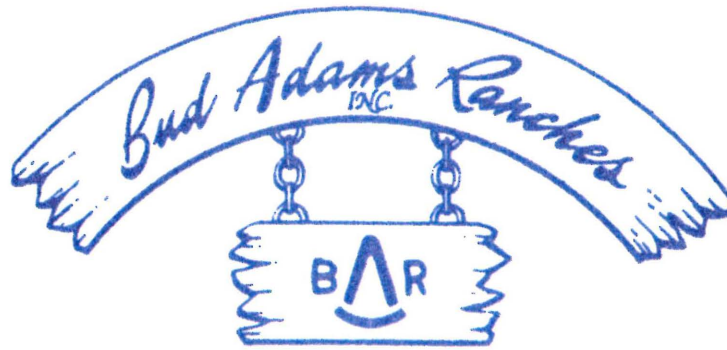


BAR I RANCH
Waller, Texas 77484



P.O. Box 844
Houston, Texas 77001
(713) 881-3400

BAR II RANCH
Buckholts, Texas 76518

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December 15, 2020

Colonel Timothy R. Vail, Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District
P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, TX 77553-1229

Docket No. FD 36025

Dear Colonel Vail,

I thank you for your prompt response to public requests for the USACE to re-evaluate solutions to reduce flooding along Buffalo Bayou. This decision demonstrates the Corp's commitment to fully engage the public by revising the presentation contained in the Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study (BBTRS) well in advance of issuing a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The Corp's willingness to accept and act on public input is vital to developing a federal flood control solution acceptable to the greater Houston community.

As detailed in my November 19, 2020 letter to you, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has regrettably rejected studying both the impacts of Hurricane Harvey and Tropical Storm Imelda in the FEIS issued in May 2020 for the proposed Texas high-speed rail (HSR) project. The widespread catastrophic flooding caused by these two storm events demonstrates the need for significant flood control changes and enhancements to Buffalo Bayou and its tributaries.

The possible construction of a disruptive HSR system connecting Houston and Dallas would cut off Buffalo Bayou and its tributaries from far northwest Harris County to the proposed HSR terminus at West Loop 610. FRA has denied the public the opportunity to properly and fairly review, study, and submit comments related to the engineering, construction and operation of the proposed HSR project as it relates to Buffalo Bayou and its tributaries. As a result, the lives and properties of thousands of Houstonians may be imperiled by the construction of the proposed HSR.

The Corp's current studies of Buffalo Bayou will represent the only analysis of the environmental impact and potential flooding hazards related to the construction and operation of the proposed HSR project that would be available for public review and comments.

Therefore, I repeat my request to you that the Corps immediately notify the FRA that upon its completion of the BBTRS, the FRA will be required to update the FEIS issued for the proposed HSR project. The construction and operation of the proposed HSR project must be compatible with all flood control measures undertaken to protect the lives and properties of thousands of Houstonians since the FRA issued its initial DEIS in December 2017. To date, FRA has seemingly dismissed such concerns. I know that the Corps considers such literal life and death matters with utmost seriousness.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. R. Scofield', written in a cursive style.

William R. Scofield
President

cc:

Rickey James, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Felicity Cunningham, Regulatory Project Manager, USACE
Brandon Mobley, Chief, Regulatory Division, Fort Worth District, USACE
Ronald Batory, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Kevin Wright, Environmental Protection Specialist, Federal Railroad Administration
Sarah Bernhardt, President & CEO at Bayou Preservation Association
Stephen Robinson, Attorney, Allen Boone Humphries Robinson
Russ Poppe, Executive Director, Harris County Flood Control District
Auggie Campbell, Director, Houston Stronger.net
Jim Blackburn, Co-director of the SSPEED Center at Rice University
Jordan Macha, Executive Director, Bayou City Waterkeeper
Jeff Taylor, Chair, Buffalo Bayou Partnership
Mary Anne Piacentini, CEO, Katy Prairie Conservancy
All Parties of Record