



7-Year Status Report

Let your voice be heard in rebuilding the Greater New Orleans Area



Levee Board Reform Report



Hurricane Katrina and the ensuing flood put south Louisiana's existing flood protection and levee board system in the spotlight. The metropolitan New Orleans area levee boards were seen as seats of patronage who failed their primary mission to focus on flood protection. The spark for action by Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans was the rejection of a bill

to reform and consolidate the levee boards by the state legislature in November 2005, despite the fact that 80% of New Orleans had been under water for 3 weeks. Reform of this broken system was critical - there would be no rebuilding of the city if citizens did not feel safe from flooding.

Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans led the movement for levee board consolidation and reform with support from The Business Council of New Orleans. Through community, media and legislative outreach, and public education programs the group urged the creation of a unified levee authority comprised of experts who would operate openly, professionally and according to sound principles.

The citizen initiative collected 53,000 signatures on a petition calling for levee board reform. The grassroots effort prompted the governor to call a special session of the Legislature in 2006 with a focus on flood protection. A rally staged by Citizens for 1 on the opening day drew some 1,200 concerned citizens, dressed in red, who gathered to support levee board reform.

Citizens for 1 carried out its advocacy efforts by building a broad-based coalition of civic and good government groups and the business community to support this reform measure in the state legislature. The Legislature ultimately passed historic legislation which dissolved local levee commissions and created the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority. The legislation required the passage of a statewide constitutional amendment. Citizens for 1, with support from the Business Council of New Orleans, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund public education efforts and mounted statewide print, radio and television campaigns to build voter support for passage of this constitutional amendment.

In September 30, 2006, Louisiana voters approved a constitutional amendment enabling consolidation and reform of levee management in southeast Louisiana with 82% statewide and 94% in Orleans. The effort brought a new era of professionalism, accountability and transparency to the New Orleans area levee board system.

- See Citizensfor1.com for detailed reports on our 2006-2012 legislative initiatives.