

Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
State of Louisiana

**BILLY NUNGESSER**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



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June 14, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur Ross  
Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
14<sup>th</sup> and Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

As you are aware, the United States Army Corps of Engineers opened the Bonnet Carre Spillway on February, 27, 2019, to relieve the pressure from the Mississippi River. After closing for nearly a month, for the first time in its operational history, the structure was reopened on May 10, 2019. The large release of freshwater into Lake Pontchartrain will severely impact our unique ecosystem and will negatively impact the livelihoods of thousands of fisherman, and crawfish and oyster farmers.

While the State of Louisiana is currently observing the impacts to the industry, I have also began discussions with Impact Assessment, Inc. to quantify the socioeconomic impacts that the freshwater is having on the fisheries industry. This will be supplemental to the assessment by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, to create a more comprehensive report.

On behalf of the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, I am requesting that you initiate the process to implement a federal fisheries disaster declaration for the State of Louisiana, to obtain financial assistance for all negatively impacted ecosystems, fishermen and related businesses in a timely manner.

I appreciate your consideration and understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Billy Nungesser".

Billy Nungesser  
Lieutenant Governor

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable John Bel Edwards, Governor  
Louisiana Congressional Delegation