

February 28, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Mail Code 1101A
Washington, District of Columbia 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler:

As President of the American Farm Bureau Federation, I am writing on behalf of the over 170,000 member families we represent in the state of Mississippi to seek your assistance on an urgent matter affecting the livelihood of thousands of Mississippi farmers.

In 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency formally issued a section 404 (c) veto of the Yazoo Backwater Pump Project in the South Delta of Mississippi under the authority of the Clean Water Act. This project is one of the final components of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project (MR&T) enacted by the Flood Control Act of 1941 that has yet to be completed. In essence this pump station would provide flood relief for residents in the South Delta that are subject to backwater flooding from planned use of river control structures administered by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, under the MR&T plan.

In the spring of 2019 an estimated 550,000 total acres were completely flooded, which included 225,000 acres of farmland. As of the writing of this letter, there are currently 460,000 acres underwater, including 183,000 acres of farmland. This is a manmade problem and the continued flooding is causing major economic harm to the residents, businesses, and wildlife in these communities.

American Farm Bureau's policy, which was updated and passed by our delegate body this year, states:

- “We support the reversal of the Environmental Protection Agency’s 2008 veto on the installation of the Yazoo Valley Backwater Pumping Station to relieve the serious and frequent flooding situation in the South Delta of Mississippi with installation of the pumping station.”
- “We support the immediate completion of all Yazoo Basin flood control projects, including the Yazoo Valley Backwater Project, and the installation of pumping stations to relieve the backwater flooding problems.”

With this policy in place and from recent discussions with our Mississippi membership, we renew our request that EPA reconsider the current 404 (c) veto your agency has in place for this

important pump project **or pursue alternatives solutions to alleviate the backwater flooding, which is** affecting lives, farms, and economic activity in the South Delta.

Thank you in advance for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Zippy Duvall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Zippy" is written with a large, stylized 'Z' and 'p's. The last name "Duvall" is written with a large, stylized 'D' and 'v's.

Zippy Duvall
American Farm Bureau Federation President