

**Gulf Islands Conservancy, Inc.**

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Mr. Munther N. Sahawneh  
Department of the Army  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District  
P.O. Box 2288  
Mobile, AL 36628-0001  
Via Email: [munther.n.sahawneh@usace.army.mil](mailto:munther.n.sahawneh@usace.army.mil)

May 2, 2024

**RE: SAM-2023-00580-APS application for Ocean Springs Marina Project, Jackson County, Mississippi.**

Dear Mr. Sahawneh:

Gulf Islands Conservancy, Inc. (GIC) submits this comment letter on the Ocean Springs Marina Project on behalf of our members and supporters.

GIC opposes the granting of a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit for the purpose of dredging an approach channel and creating a marina or pier/wharf with docking slips on Front Beach Drive in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. This project is in direct conflict with this Act and with the Mississippi Coastal Zone Management Program.

The City of Ocean Springs has yet to change its own city zoning regulations to allow for this multi-part development project that is adjacent to a residential neighborhood, to protected public property, and to an undeveloped public beach.

No permit from any outside agency should be considered until the City of Ocean Springs makes a final, legal decision about the required city zoning changes that are needed for this project to move forward on the local level. No public funds should be obligated or spent for any reason related to this development project until this required city zoning change gains public approval, and is approved and passed by all necessary authorities.

Because of the public opposition to any commercial development in this residential area, the Corps should deny any permit application for a development project at this location, including a pier. There is a public pier adjacent to this location at Fort Maurepas City Park and Nature Preserve (where the current city administration needlessly cut down the historic Bienville Oak) with parking for anyone coming by car. There is no public need for any part this development project, and there is specifically no need for the proposed marina.

The Corps must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The impacts to economics, aesthetics, wetlands, tidal flow, oyster reefs, fish and wildlife values, floodplain values, land use, shoreline erosion, water quality, public safety, noise, lights, increased traffic

and runoff, historic preservation, the public interest in this recreational sand beach and non-commercial waterfront, consideration of property ownership, and in general the needs and desires of the people have not been considered by the applicant. How could they have considered all this when they have not even addressed their own, necessary, city zoning ordinance/regulation change(s)?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) may be required. The Corps will need to determine which kind of environmental analysis it will require of the applicant, an EA or an EIS.

If this project changes at all, this should be re-noticed by the Corps so the public and the commenters can accurately address the extent, costs and impacts of the changed project.

Please accept, as part of our record, the attached comments letter by GIC to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources concerning the permit application submitted to DMR for this project. Also, please accept, as part of our record, the attached comment letters submitted to the Corps by Healthy Gulf, Mr. Joe Jewel, and SaveOS . We strongly agree with their letters, but we do not see the need to rewrite all the noted issues, points, and information they provided to the COE with their responses.

The Corps must conduct a public interest review to ensure that the foreseeable harm does not outweigh the benefits to the public interest. Given the interest shown by the public in this project, GIC requests a public hearing for this permit.

Thank you for the opportunity to write comments on this permit.

Sincerely,

**Terese P Collins**

Terese P Collins, Board Member  
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