# Case

## Status Quo Solves

### 1NC

#### 500 year levees are in place and all your authors are cited as agreeing with us.

NYT 6/14/12

New York Times, June 14th 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/15/us/vast-defenses-now-shielding-new-orleans.html?\_r=1&pagewanted=all&pagewanted=print

Nearly seven years after flood waters from Hurricane Katrina gushed over New Orleans, $14.5 billion worth of civil works designed to block such surges is now in place — a 133-mile chain of levees, flood walls, gates and pumps too vast to take in at once, except perhaps from space. ¶ Individual components of the system can be appreciated from a less celestial elevation. At the new Seabrook floodgate complex, climb up three steep ladders, open a trap door, and step out into the blazing sunlight atop a 54-foot tower that was not here just two years ago. From there one looks out over a $165 million barrier across the shipping canal that links Lake Pontchartrain, the Mississippi River and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. ¶ Two “lift gates,” 50 feet across, can be lowered to block the waters of Lake Pontchartrain. A navigation gate 95 feet wide, whose curved sides weigh 220 tons apiece, can be swung gently but mightily into place. When open — which will be most of the time — the gates will allow easy boat traffic. ¶ When a storm threatens, however, they will seal off the canal from the kind of surge that devastated the Lower Ninth Ward in Katrina. ¶ Yet all that seems puny in comparison to the two-mile “Great Wall” that can seal off the channel from Lake Borgne to the east, or the billion-dollar west closure complex, which features the biggest pumping station on the planet. ¶ Now, hurricane season has returned, as it does each June. Whatever storms might approach New Orleans this year or in the future, they will encounter a vastly upgraded ring of protection. The question is whether it will be enough. ¶ When Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, the city’s hurricane protection system became a symbol of America’s haphazard approach to critical infrastructure. The patchwork of walls and levees built over the course of 40 years was still far from complete when the storm came, and even the Army Corps of Engineers admitted that this was “a system in name only.” Flood walls collapsed, and earthen levees built from sandy, dredged soils melted away. ¶ What has emerged since could come to symbolize the opposite: a vast civil works project that gives every appearance of strength and permanence. No other American city has anything like it. “This is the best system the greater New Orleans area has ever had,” said Col. Edward R. Fleming, the commander of the New Orleans district of the corps. ¶ Marc Walraven, a district head in the Dutch ministry of transport, public works and water management, recently toured the defenses. While 100 percent safety is impossible, he said, and challenges in operations and maintenance can be expected as the corps passes the facilities over to local management in the coming year, “the constructions that have been built are in my opinion adequate to defend New Orleans.” ¶ Tim Doody, the president of the levee board that oversees Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes, disagrees. While the construction appears to be strong, he said, the level of protection authorized by Congress for the corps to build is “woefully inadequate.” ¶ The new system was designed and constructed to provide what is informally known as 100-year protection, which means it was built to prevent the kind of flooding that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year. That standard is used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to determine whether homeowners and businesses must buy flood insurance to qualify for federally regulated or insured mortgages. ¶ But New Orleans has seen storms far more damaging than the 100-year standard. Katrina is generally considered to have been a 400-year storm, and rising seas and more numerous hurricanes predicted in many climate-change models suggest harsher conditions to come. ¶ “It’s what the country will pay for; it’s what FEMA insures for,” Mr. Doody said. “But our thought and belief is that we all need to be behind protection that’s greater than that.” ¶ Still, corps officials insist, the new system has been designed with far greater strength and resiliency than anything that went before it. While a major storm could lead to street flooding — something New Orleans, much of which is below sea level, sees even with heavy rainfall — the kind of catastrophic, explosive wall of water resulting from the failure of sections of flood wall and the dissolution of poorly-built levees that devastated so much of the city after Katrina should not occur again, they say. ¶ Moreover, newly storm-proofed pumps can drain off the flooding with relative speed. Colonel Fleming said he believed that the armoring built in means “the system will be resilient up to the 500-year storm.” ¶ As for the often contentious relationship between the corps and community groups like the levee boards, the rising network of protective structures is helping to calm tensions, Colonel Fleming said. “I don’t want to portray this that we’re sitting around singing ‘Kumbaya,’ ” he said, “but we’re not yelling and screaming.” ¶ Overall construction started in 2006, and while some work is still going on, the projects are substantially complete and functional for this hurricane season. ¶ Even many in the corps seem astonished by the speed of the work; projects of this magnitude would normally take decades to construct, said Kevin G. Wagner, a senior project manager with the agency. Looking out toward the billion-dollar pumping station and gates at the west closure complex, he said, “It’s truly amazing, starting in 2009, to be where we are today.” ¶ To speed up the process, the corps used a streamlined process for getting environmental permits and urged contractors to work their projects in parallel — for example, beginning construction on the foundations of some structures before the final designs for the walls, gates and buildings were complete. ¶ More important, Congress voted the $14.5 billion —nearly three times the annual civil works budget for the agency — up front instead of the usual incremental dribbling out of appropriations. “Full funding of the program gave us lots of flexibility,” said Michael F. Park, the chief of Task Force Hope, the special corps entity created to oversee the projects. ¶ Mr. Wagner, who lost his home as did other family members in Katrina, said with chagrin, “It feels terrible to say, but it takes a disaster to get that kind of funding.” ¶ Building greater than 100-year protection might not be simply a matter of building walls ever higher. It will also come from restoring the coastal environment that slows and buffers storms and their surge. It means restoring wetlands that have been rapidly disappearing, and perhaps creating barrier islands to act as speed bumps for storms. ¶ But Katrina did not just leave a soaked and despoiled city; it left a residue of mistrust of the corps. When asked whether he thought the new hurricane structures would be effective, Jasen Seymour, a 19-year-old who was bowfishing with a friend near the 17th Street Canal, said “If the Army Corps of Engineers has anything to do with it, it’s not going to be strong.” ¶ Still, some residents demonstrate their faith in the future simply by not leaving. Artie Folse, who [rebuilt his home after Katrina](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/23/us/nationalspecial/23katrina.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all) and lives just a few blocks from the site of the breach of the 17th Street Canal that inundated his Lakeview neighborhood, said: “The fact of the matter is, I still live here. That pretty much says it all.”

### 2NC

#### Status quo levees solve the affirmative – Congress just funded 14.5 billion for the aff – either that will not work and more funding won’t do the job, or the aff is non-inherent – that’s NYT

#### It is how the Gulf Coast is modernizing as well – it’s all part of the RESTORE act.

News Star 7/8/12

News Star.Com – 7/8/12, http://www.thenewsstar.com/article/20120708/NEWS01/120708007

WASHINGTON — It took Gulf Coast lawmakers more than two years of prodding and negotiating to persuade a divided Congress their communities deserve most of the billions of dollars BP will pay in fines for its role in the 2010 oil spill.¶ Now comes another challenge: figuring out how to spend that money.¶ Officials in the five states affected — Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas — have some time to weigh which projects and programs will best help the Gulf Coast recover from the nation’s worst environmental disaster.¶ The first payments of the estimated $5 billion to $20 billion in fines imposed by the federal government aren’t expected until at least early next year, after a scheduled civil trial. If a settlement is reached before that, the money could arrive sooner.¶ “It’s a monumental law,’’ Brian Moore, legislative director at the National Audubon Society, said of the RESTORE Act, which passed Congress last week as part of a larger transportation bill. President Barack Obama was scheduled to sign the bill on Friday.¶ “The next step is just deciding the size of the fines and pressing onto people as much as possible the need for this to happen quickly,” Moore said. “This place has been devastated really — the environment and the economy. We need to fix it fast.’’¶ Under the RESTORE Act, 80 percent of the fine money levied against BP is earmarked for the five Gulf Coast states. It’s an unprecedented arrangement. Typically, such financial penalties go to an oil-spill liability trust fund and the U.S. Treasury’s general fund for distribution nationwide.¶ Much of the money is expected to finance projects already on the drawing board, including some proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.¶ Earlier this year, Louisiana passed a 50-year coastal plan that calls for 109 projects, including hurricane protection and coastal restoration. Louisiana officials will use some of the RESTORE funding toward the $50 billion master plan.¶ “We’re going to use that document as the blueprint for all investments that we make in Louisiana,’’ said Garrett Graves, director of Louisiana’s Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. “Making an investment in ecosystem restoration, making other investments to improve the resiliencies of some of our coastal communities — that’s where we plan on prioritizing the (early) investments.’’¶ Gulf Coast advocacy groups will work to make sure state and local officials “do the next part, right,’’ said Casi Callaway, executive director of Mobile Baykeeper, an environmental group based in Mobile, Ala.¶ “We are not finished with our work,” Callaway said. “We have a long, long way to go still, but the biggest and hardest hurdle has passed — getting it through Congress.’’ Democratic Sen. Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, who teamed with Republican Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama to introduce the RESTORE Act, will begin touring Louisiana on Monday to tout the bill’s passage and its future impact on communities hard hit by the spill. Stops include Jean Lafitte, Thibodaux, Lafayette, Lake Charles and Bell City.¶ “We will take a historic step forward in jump-starting critical coastal restoration in Louisiana following the worst environmental accident in our nation’s history,’’ Landrieu said in statement Thursday. “This tremendous victory would never have been possible without the broad support of environmental, wildlife and business groups in Louisiana and throughout the Gulf Coast.”¶ Louisiana has lost 1,900 square miles of coastal wetlands over the last eight years, Graves said. The oil spill is making that worse, he said.¶ “Being able to make investments to improve the resiliency of the ecosystem in these communities — that’s the key,’’ he said.¶ From the outset, sponsors of the RESTORE (Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourism Opportunities and Revived Economies) Act said most of the fine money should go to Gulf Coast communities because they know best how to spend it.¶ But they attached a few conditions:¶ — Thirty percent of the money will be controlled by the 11-member Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, which will develop a comprehensive restoration plan. Members include all five governors (or their designees), the secretaries of the Agriculture, Commerce, Homeland Security and Interior departments, the secretary of the Army and the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.¶ — Sixty-five percent of the money will be controlled by state and local governments for such things as tourism, the environment and the economy. Of that, 35 percent will be distributed equally among the five states for economic and ecological recovery. The rest will be distributed to the states based on a formula that takes into account factors such as miles of beachfront and population.¶ — The remaining 5 percent of the fine money will finance research, with half going to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and half going to a “center of excellence” in each state.¶ Environmental groups will push to require BP to pay the maximum amount of fines.¶ “They’re big boys ... they messed up,’’ said Paul Harrison, senior director of water programs for the Environmental Defense Fund. “They need to pay.’’¶ Harrison said the groups will focus on making sure BP “lives up to its promise of doing the right thing and making the Gulf Coast whole ... better beaches, better fisheries, better wetlands, clean water and a better economy.”¶ Grover Robinson IV, an Escambia County (Fla.) commissioner, said many projects, such as beach renourishment and storm water systems, are logical candidates for RESTORE Act money.¶ “The best news is that we’ve got a plan and a structure without the money,” he said. “That allows us the proper time to go do this. There’s no rush to immediately try to make everything happen and go make decisions, because we don’t have everything yet.”¶ In Alabama, Callaway’s group is pressing for a project to build 100 miles of coastal oyster reefs. She hopes to see similar projects throughout the region, which she said has lost thousands of miles of the reefs over the last six decades.¶ While each state has a different process for determining how funds will be spent, local advocacy groups hope officials will craft comprehensive plans that include projects with wide reach, long-term viability and public input.¶ “We are figuring out great plans for how we can do real live, giant restoration projects on the Gulf Coast,’’ Callaway said.¶ Even with restoration plans in place, the fine money won’t be available right away.¶ “We’re in somewhat of a holding pattern,’’ Graves said. “We don’t have clarity on dollar figures and ...we don’t know if the dollars will be coming in 2012 or they’ll be coming in 2020.’’¶ A new report suggests RESTORE Act money will help create as many as 57,000 new jobs over 10 years in the Gulf Coast.¶ Most of those new jobs will be in the transportation, trade and utilities industries, according to the report released by Greater New Orleans, Inc., a regional economic development group in southeast Louisiana.¶ “Before we had the oil spill, we were already working towards how are we going to utilize funds that are coming down the pike,” said Robin Barnes, the group’s executive vice president. “This basically allows us to get started a little bit sooner.’’

#### No future Katrina – past failures were caused by laziness – Katrina changed everything.

Rosenthal 3/22/12

Sandy Rosenthal is founder of Levees.org and H.J. Bosworth Jr., P.E., is lead researcher for Levees.org. http://blog.nola.com/opinions\_impact/print.html?entry=/2012/05/closer\_eye\_on\_levees\_after\_kat.html

After Hurricane Katrina exposed design and construction flaws in levees protecting the New Orleans region, Congress responded by passing the first-ever country-wide levee safety legislation, which may affect the 55 percent of the nation's population protected by levees. But first a little history.¶ Right after the devastating flood, local media reported that annual levee inspections in Orleans Parish tended to be quick drive-by affairs ending with lunch for 40-60 people costing the state as much as $900.¶ While this is true, the same reports went on to suggest that the quickie inspections might have contributed to the catastrophic flooding and that the Orleans Levee District might be partly responsible. Neither suggestion was ultimately borne out by the facts.¶ Pre-Katrina, the Army Corps of Engineers was required to administer annual levee inspections of completed federally built flood protection works in Orleans Parish. These Inspections of Completed Works by the corps were designed to ensure that the Orleans Levee District (aka the Orleans Levee Board) was complying with its federally mandated levee maintenance.¶ Before the 2005 flood, the district's maintenance activity included mainly cutting the grass on levee embankments and removing unwanted vegetation and debris. The Orleans Levee District also did ongoing but informal year-round inspections including, but not limited to, checking concrete surfaces on flood walls for open cracks and inspecting for ruts, depressions and erosion on earthen levees.¶ To be clear, responsibility for the annual inspections belongs solely to the corps. It would obviously be a conflict of interest for the levee district to inspect its own work. The corps' inspections should perhaps be thought of as independent, once-per-year quality audits of the levee district's year-round maintenance activity.¶ But it is important to note that the Corps of Engineers' annual inspections were not designed to verify structural stability and performance and, thus, could not have been expected to uncover potential problems with levees' and flood walls' ability to function. In other words, they were not a factor in the flooding as concluded by the preeminent report for information relating to the 2005 flood -- the Decision-Making Chronology Report of 2008.¶ The pre-flood levee inspections are therefore irrelevant, a red herring in the story about the New Orleans flood.¶ Nevertheless, after the flood and after passage of the National Levee Safety Act in 2007, the Army Corps overhauled its annual inspections protocols nationwide. Now using global positioning technology and other modern technology, the corps' annual inspections are more formal, more uniform and pay greater attention to all components of the levee system.¶ In addition, more rigorous assessments called periodic inspections performed by a multidisciplinary team and led by a professional engineer are now being conducted every five years.¶ And that's not all.¶ Another important advancement after the flood is the insertion by Congress of language into the National Levee Safety Act requiring the Army Corps "to estimate of the number of structures and population at risk and protected by levees that would be adversely impacted if the levee fails or water levels exceed the height of the levee." Using these estimates, the corps is developing a method of communicating to local sponsors the overall condition of each levee system. These are called Levee Safety Action Classifications, and according to Rich Varuso, deputy chief of the corps' geotechnical branch in New Orleans, about 100 of 2,000 are completed.¶ This program is very important because its creation by the corps is a step toward removing political control from Congress on how water projects are prioritized and funded. Until now, water project funding has been controlled by the whim of Congress. The Levee Safety Action Classifcations program inserts common sense in the form of important science and data into the process and may also remove some of the "politicizing" of how water projects are chosen.¶ We eagerly await release of the final classifications for both the New Orleans region and for all levee systems in the country.¶ In the meantime, those annual lunches, which were intended as an occasion for corps personnel to socialize with staffers from the Orleans Levee District, are a thing of the past.¶ Hopefully, myths regarding the pre-Katrina levee inspections, and their role in the catastrophic flooding of August 2005, will also soon become a thing of the past.

#### **Not inherent and the status quo solves the case**

Schwartz 6/14

(John, “Vast Defenses Now Shielding New Orleans”, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/15/us/vast-defenses-now-shielding-new-orleans.html>)

NEW ORLEANS — Finally, there is a wall around this city.

Nearly seven years after flood waters from Hurricane Katrina gushed over New Orleans, $14.5 billion worth of civil works designed to block such surges is now in place — a 133-mile chain of levees, flood walls, gates and pumps too vast to take in at once, except perhaps from space.

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When Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, the city’s hurricane protection system became a symbol of America’s haphazard approach to critical infrastructure. The patchwork of walls and levees built over the course of 40 years was still far from complete when the storm came, and even the Army Corps of Engineers admitted that this was “a system in name only.” Flood walls collapsed, and earthen levees built from sandy, dredged soils melted away.

What has emerged since could come to symbolize the opposite: a vast civil works project that gives every appearance of strength and permanence. No other American city has anything like it. “This is the best system the greater New Orleans area has ever had,” said Col. Edward R. Fleming, the commander of the New Orleans district of the corps.

Marc Walraven, a district head in the Dutch ministry of transport, public works and water management, recently toured the defenses. While 100 percent safety is impossible, he said, and challenges in operations and maintenance can be expected as the corps passes the facilities over to local management in the coming year, “the constructions that have been built are in my opinion adequate to defend New Orleans.”

Tim Doody, the president of the levee board that oversees Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes, disagrees. While the construction appears to be strong, he said, the level of protection authorized by Congress for the corps to build is “woefully inadequate.”

The new system was designed and constructed to provide what is informally known as 100-year protection, which means it was built to prevent the kind of flooding that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year. That standard is used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to determine whether homeowners and businesses must buy flood insurance to qualify for federally regulated or insured mortgages.

But New Orleans has seen storms far more damaging than the 100-year standard. Katrina is generally considered to have been a 400-year storm, and rising seas and more numerous hurricanes predicted in many climate-change models suggest harsher conditions to come.

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Still, corps officials insist, the new system has been designed with far greater strength and resiliency than anything that went before it. While a major storm could lead to street flooding — something New Orleans, much of which is below sea level, sees even with heavy rainfall — the kind of catastrophic, explosive wall of water resulting from the failure of sections of flood wall and the dissolution of poorly-built levees that devastated so much of the city after Katrina should not occuhr again, they say.

Moreover, newly storm-proofed pumps can drain off the flooding with relative speed. Colonel Fleming said he believed that the armoring built in means “the system will be resilient up to the 500-year storm.”

#### Status quo is investing billions and specifically targeting Katrina vulnerabilities

Greater New Orleans 12

(2011: New hurricane protection system is built”, <http://www.nola.com/175years/index.ssf/2012/01/2011_new_hurricane_protection.html>,)

An $8 billion re-engineered levee system came on line for hurricane season, six years after its predecessor failed miserably to protect the area from Hurricane Katrina. A chastened Army Corps of Engineers admitted that design, construction and maintenance flaws caused the old system to fail.

The Corps of Engineers worked feverishly to meet a 2011 congressional deadline to have a new, stronger system in place to protect the area from a 100-year storm.

Congress assigned the corps to oversee New Orleans hurricane protection after Hurricane Betsy in 1965. Forty years later, the corps acknowledged that the patchwork of walls and levees was "a system in name only.” It took the corps 10 months, but it finally admitted that its design for the failed floodwalls on the 17th Street and London Avenue canals was faulty. With the houses of many of its employees flooded, the corps vowed to get the new system right.

Levees failed in Katrina because they were made from porous soils. Millions of tons of heavy clay were dug out from across the region to fix and raise old levees and build new ones on the West Bank and in the River Parishes. Walls and levees that breached were replaced with walls with foundations 70 or more feet deep.

The keys to the new system are two new structures designed to keep the east and west banks protected from storm surge. The Lake Borgne Surge Barrier, also called The Great Wall of Louisiana, is a nearly two-mile-long, 26-foot-high barrier to prevent the kind of flooding that ravaged the Lower 9th Ward. The West Closure Complex in Belle Chasse will prevent the Harvey Canal from inundating the West Bank. Giant pumps are used to get rainwater runoff past the barrier.

Parishes got into the act by building safehouses to keep drainage pumps powered and staffed during hurricanes. The Corps of Engineers will still spend billions to armor new levees and build permanent gates and pumps at four New Orleans drainage canals.

## Solvency

### Frontline

#### Construction barriers block solvency

Smith 12

(S.E., edited by Borwnwyn Harris, <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-caused-the-levees-to-break-in-new-orleans-during-hurricane-katrina.htm>)

Anyone who watched media reports from August 2005, when Hurricane Katrina made landfall in New Orleans, will remember the images of water flooding over the levees which were designed to protect the city. A number of factors caused the levees surrounding New Orleans to fail, ranging from poor design to the sheer ferocity of the storm, and these factors were considered when rebuilding the levee system in the wake of the storm. Other low-lying American cities also considered the failure of the levees in New Orleans when evaluating their own preparedness for storms.

New Orleans is a city in a rather unique position, because it is entirely below sea level. Residents must contend with the surrounding Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain, and Gulf of Mexico with a series of levees which are designed to keep floodwaters out of the city. When circumstances caused the levees to break in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the effect was akin to slopping tea into a saucer; the water pooled with nowhere to go.

Within the first 24 hours of the storm, 28 levees had failed, and the total level of broken or failed levees rose to over 50 within a week. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), which had built the levees, issued an official explanation within days of the storm. According to USACE, the levees were only designed to protect New Orleans from a Category Three storm, and the storm surge generated by Hurricane Katrina was simply too massive for the levees to handle, which caused the levees to break.

USACE officials justified the inadequate protection by explaining that the funding for the levee project had been too restrictive for additional safety measures. The funding decision was made on the basis of careful risk analysis, which weighed the potential for storms above Category Three against the cost of installing levees, and the potential cost of coping with the after-effects of a major disaster. Risk assessment is often a gamble, and in the case of Hurricane Katrina, it would appear that the house won.

However, within weeks of the hurricane, additional information about the levee failures emerged, and professional engineering organizations posited several other scenarios which could have caused the levees to break. One of the most significant pieces of information in these investigations was the debris line, which was below the level of the top of the levee in many cases. This means that the floodwaters could not have topped these levees, and therefore they must have failed in some other way.

Engineers who criticized the levee failure pointed out that many of the levees were poorly reinforced, or built on substrata with a low shear strength, which meant that when floodwaters pushed against the levees, they simply gave way. In addition, the levee sections were often not interlocked, which would have increased their strength, and some of the levees were built over dirt or peat levees which were severely eroded by the floodwaters, causing those levees to break.

Independent studies concluded that low-quality construction and poor design caused the levees to break. While USACE officials initially resisted this conclusion, they ultimately carried out their own investigations, and admitted culpability in a series of Senate hearings held to discuss Hurricane Katrina. Oddly enough, despite this lesson, early versions of the plans to replace the levees were of even lower quality than the original levees.

#### **No solvency---data gaps**

ASCE 9

(American Society of Civil Engineers, Levee Fact Shee, <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/fact-sheet/levees>)

In the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. The Act required the establishment and maintenance of an inventory of all federal levees, as well as those non-federal levees for which information is voluntarily provided by state and local government agencies. The inventory is intended to be a comprehensive, geospatial database that is shared between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FEMA, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the states.

While the USACE has begun the inventory of all federal levees, to date few states or local agencies have provided any formal information, leaving the inventory far from complete. In addition, there is still much to be determined about the condition and performance of the nation’s levees, both federal and nonfederal. As of February 2009, initial results from USACE’s inventory show that while more than half of all federally inspected levees do not have any deficiencies, 177, or about 9%, are expected to fail in a flood event. The inventory data collection process is ongoing and these preliminary findings are expected to change as the process continues.1, 6

#### The plan doesn’t solve remaining vulnerabilities

Little 12

(Richard, NYT, “Protecting New Orleans”, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/26/opinion/protecting-new-orleans.html>)

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the resulting devastation of New Orleans, there was much public demand to “get the engineering right” for the levees and other floodworks. That has apparently been accomplished (“Vast Defenses Now Shielding New Orleans Against Big Storms,” news article, June 15).

However, before complacency sets in that the city and its residents are safe behind unbreachable defenses, it would be useful to revisit the other factors that contributed to the disaster. Instead of asking only, “How can we design levees so they will not breach or collapse if subjected to a major storm?,” perhaps the more appropriate question is, “How can we protect the people of New Orleans from floods in the future at a reasonable cost?”

The answer to the second question lies at least as much with institutions, governance and sustainable funding as with structural design and levee maintenance. It is not apparent that these areas have received similar upgrades.

#### **No solvency---non-federal levees**

CO 11 (Catholic Online, Six years after Hurricane Katrina: Are U.S. levees safer?, 10/30/2011, <http://www.catholic.org/national/national_story.php?id=43447>, ZBurdette)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was largely blamed of building substandard levees and floodwalls that failed when Katrina swamped the Gulf Coast in 2005. The agency has since spent $56 million developing the initial phase of a national levee inventory as required by Congress. The Corps has released a database on nearly 14,000 miles of levees under its jurisdiction.

However, the inventory doesn't include more than 100,000 additional miles of levees not covered by the Corps' safety program. Some levees are little more than mounds of earth piled up 100 years ago to protect farm fields.

Other levees extend for miles and are made of concrete and steel, with sophisticated pump and drainage systems, shielding homes, businesses and infrastructure such as highways and power plants.

Established after Katrina, the National Committee on Levee Safety has evaluated the system and has called for improvements. The committee issued a report in 2009 calling for the Corps to catalog and inspect every levee so deficiencies could be fixed. Corps officials contend that Congress has not provided enough authority or money to add non-federal levees to the database, which is a massive undertaking that would take years.

"The reality is, we don't know how many levees are out there," Eric Halpin, the Army Corps' special assistant for dam and levee safety and vice chairman of the levee safety committee says. Halpin acknowledged the inventory presently includes only about 10 percent of the likely total.

#### **Levees aren’t sufficient to solve protection**

Schwartz 5 (John, Full Flood Safety in New Orleans Could Take Billions and Decades, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/29/national/nationalspecial/29flood.html?pagewanted=all>, ZBurdette)

Building Category 5 protection, however, is proving to be an astronomically expensive and technically complex proposition. It would involve far more than just higher levees: there would have to be extensive changes to the city's system of drainage canals and pumps, environmental restoration on a vast scale to replenish buffering wetlands and barrier islands, and even sea gates far out of town near the Gulf of Mexico.

The cost estimates are still fuzzy, but the work would easily cost more than $32 billion, state officials say, and could take decades to complete.

Maybe some kind of vagueness solvency deficit //fiat arg

Schwartz 5 (John, Full Flood Safety in New Orleans Could Take Billions and Decades, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/29/national/nationalspecial/29flood.html?pagewanted=all>, ZBurdette)

While every expert has a list of things that would upgrade the city's flood controls, Category 5 protection is not easy to define, experts say. Dan Hitchings, director of Task Force Hope, the corps's Hurricane Katrina relief effort, noted that Category 3 hurricanes were specifically defined while Category 5 includes any hurricanes with winds greater than 155 miles an hour and a storm surge greater than 18 feet.

"What's the top end for a Cat 5 hurricane?" Mr. Hitchings said. "There isn't one."

#### **Low risk of natural disasters**

Schwartz 5 (John, Full Flood Safety in New Orleans Could Take Billions and Decades, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/29/national/nationalspecial/29flood.html?pagewanted=all>, ZBurdette)

Herbert Saffir, a co-creator of the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale, said he would not recommend designing a Category 5 protection system because such a storm would be unlikely to hit any particular spot more than once in 500 years. Only three Category 5 storms in recorded history have made landfall in the United States, Mr. Saffir said; Hurricane Katrina had been a Category 5 in the gulf but was at Category 4 at most when it landed east of New Orleans near Buras, La.

#### **Pumps solve flooding**

Schwartz 5 (John, Full Flood Safety in New Orleans Could Take Billions and Decades, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/29/national/nationalspecial/29flood.html?pagewanted=all>, ZBurdette)

New Orleans may be able to get by with a protection level less than that required to resist a Category 5 storm, if it is robustly designed and built, said Robert A. Dalrymple, a professor of civil engineering at Johns Hopkins University and a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers team that investigated the levee breaches.

"If you have a Category 3 protection system and a Category 4 storm hits it, there will be overtopping of the walls," Professor Dalrymple said. But if the walls can be built so that they can resist the scouring action of the overflowing water, and "if the walls stay there, there will only be flooding for several hours," he added. The street drains and pumping stations could then remove the water.

# Off-Case

## States CP

### 1NC

#### The State of Louisiana should \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert Plan)

#### CP solves and doesn’t link to federalism – plan fails before implementation.

Griffin 7

Griffin, Stephen M. (2007) "Stop Federalism Before It Kills Again: Reflections on Hurricane Katrina," Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development: Vol. 21: Iss. 2, Article 6.   
Available at: http://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcred/vol21/iss2/6

On Wednesday, August 31, 2005, two days after Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff held a press conference at which he was asked a question about the chain of command and how conflicts among levels of government are worked out during a national disaster. He responded: '[W]e come in to assist local and state authorities. Under the constitution, state and local authorities have the principal first line of response obligation .... DHS has the coordinating role, or the managing role .... [T]he president has, of course, the ultimate responsibility for all the federal effort here .... I want to emphasize the federal government does not supersede the state and local government. We fit ... in a comprehensive response plan."'2 Secretary Chertoff was reflecting the official policy of the federal government, as embodied in the "National Response Plan," adopted in late 2004.3 In the plan (a largely technical document authored by the Department of Homeland Security and meant for the bureaucracy), the emphasis was on having the lowest level of government possible handle disaster response. The plan states under "Planning Assumptions & Considerations": "Incidents are typically managed at the lowest possible geographic, organizational, and jurisdictional level."4 One of the most unusual characteristics of Hurricane Katrina was how it blasted away nearly all of the local government infrastructure in New Orleans and on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. It therefore removed the basis on which the National Response Plan was built.5 Katrina challenged assumptions going back many decades as to how the federal structure should operate, not just during a crisis, but also in preparing for crisis situations. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, journalists and the public began asking why the effort to aid the Gulf Coast floundered so badly. A number of news stories, notably by the Newhouse News Service and New York Times, laid part of the blame on a defective system of governance. The Newhouse News Service story stated that the muddled response to Hurricane Katrina exposed something known by Washington insiders: "For reasons that run deep and probably can't be fixed, Washington has difficulty making long-range plans, coordinating its actions and tackling the tough political decisions required for swift disaster response and other critical responsibilities."6 A number of factors were cited: (1) power and authority are fragmented as the framers intended; (2) election cycles mean attention spans are short; (3) bureaucracy stifles initiative; and (4) intense partisan conflict.7 "Chief among the federal government's structure problems is its division of responsibility, said Paul Light, professor of public service at New York University. 'It's built into the Constitution that we have a federal system where states and localities have a lot of responsibility,' he said. 'Part of this is embedded in the system that we don't want a strong federal presence .... The founders were clear in wanting to protect citizens from the national government."' 8 An important theme here was that the eighteenth-century federal order persists and has certain effects. In this system, there are separate governments that do not ordinarily share power. If coordinated action is required, everyone has a veto over the outcome of the process before the bargaining starts. Washington Post columnist David Broder wrote of Hurricane Katrina: "The failure to respond to that disaster exposed one of the few real structural weaknesses in our Constitution: a mechanism to coordinate the work of local, state and national governments." 9 News reports showed that a week after Katrina made landfall, local, state and federal officials were still arguing over who was in charge.lO

## Spending DA

### Link

#### **Spending link**

ASCE 9

(“Report Card 2009 Grades”, <https://apps.asce.org/reportcard/2009/grades.cfm>, ZBurdette)

More than 85% of the nation's estimated 100,000 miles of levees are locally owned and maintained. The reliability of many of these levees is unknown. Many are over 50 years old and were originally built to protect crops from flooding. With an increase in development behind these levees, the risk to public health and safety from failure has increased. Rough estimates put the cost at more than $100 billion to repair and rehabilitate the nation's levees.

## Revenue CP

### 1NC

#### **Counterplan: The United States federal government should give Louisiana half of revenues from federal leasing for offshore oil and gas drilling beyond the three-mile territorial limit in the gulf.**

#### **That solves defenses**

Schwartz 5 (John, Full Flood Safety in New Orleans Could Take Billions and Decades, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/29/national/nationalspecial/29flood.html?pagewanted=all>, ZBurdette)

Scott A. Angelle, the secretary of the Department of Natural Resources for Louisiana, said that fortifying New Orleans to the highest level could be accomplished by giving Louisiana half of revenues from federal leasing for offshore oil and gas drilling beyond the three-mile territorial limit in the gulf. The plan, which has been proposed in legislation by Louisiana's United States senators, Mary L. Landrieu and David Vitter, would produce as much as $2.5 billion a year. The state currently receives no money for drilling beyond the limit.