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George Bush Is Solely Responsible For Abandoning The Levees

by Michael in New York on [9/04/2005 03:48:00 PM](#)

George Bush is solely responsible for weakening the levee system that should have protected New Orleans. Yes, for decades projects have been on the boards to do a massive rebuilding project. (Total cost? \$14 billion, which is exactly what we spend in Iraq **every six weeks.**) Louisiana has begged and pleaded for that work to begin and we all shoulder responsibility for ignoring that obvious need -- you can blame every President from JFK to Bush for that, not to mention the Congress. But the burden does grow for each succeeding President (the longer you wait, the more dangerous it is to delay), so Clinton and Bush are a lot more to blame than Kennedy and Johnson.

But beyond that massive project there is the daily hard work of keeping the levees in shape. It's tough and unglamorous but it has to be done. Every President since Nixon understood that and made sure the levees were strengthened. Every President but Bush. Bush attacked the levee system with unprecedented glee. He cut funding for flood protection by 80%. He let mostly oil and gas companies gobble up the wetlands that act as a natural defense for New Orleans at a rate of 25 square miles a year. **And read this:**

But the skimping has worsened since President Bush's election, particularly after September 11. Federal spending on flood control in south-east Louisiana has been cut by almost half since 2001, from \$69 million per year to \$36.5 million. Funds for work at Lake Pontchartrain, the source of the flooding, have fallen by nearly two-thirds over three years, from \$14.25 million to \$5.7 million. As a result, **work on New Orleans' east bank hurricane levees stopped last summer for the first time in 37 years.**

Every President since Nixon knew maintaining the levees was important, essential work. But it ground to a halt on Bush's watch because he didn't care. Nixon worked to maintain the levees. Ford worked to maintain the levees. Carter worked to maintain the levees. Reagan worked to maintain the levees. Clinton worked to maintain the levees. Even his own father worked to maintain the levees. But George Bush abandoned ship. Work on maintaining the levees had been going on for four decades and it ground to a halt on Bush's watch. Like Cheney, he had "other priorities."

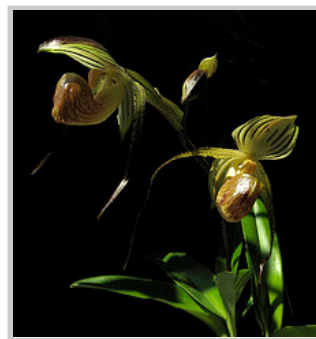
George Bush is solely responsible for cutting funds to the marrow and letting levee work grind to a halt last summer for the first time since 1968.

For most people, the rule is "you break it; you own it." Thanks to his dereliction of duty, for Bush the rule is clearly "You own it; you break it."



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