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# *Parish of St. James*

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**Peter A. Dufresne**  
Parish President

February 6, 2020

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PARISH PRESIDENT DUFRESNE DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY AHEAD OF 2020 SPRING FLOOD AND HURRICANE SEASON**

Convent, LA – Today, Parish President Pete Dufresne declared a State of Emergency for all of St. James Parish in preparation for the 2020 spring flood and hurricane season. As this season presents a threat to the life, health safety, and property preservation for residents, a declaration aids in the efforts to properly execute a parish wide drainage project.

The executive order allows the parish to take precautionary measures and implement the plan established by the Drainage Taskforce covering east bank and west bank drainage problems that have been neglected over time. Parish officials and operations crews have identified servitudes and continue to study capabilities of in-house work and that of contractors. By declaring this emergency, the parish has the authority to immediately deploy the excavation of major canals, as priority, while working in a grid system to then clear smaller ditches and waterways.

In accordance to this declaration, St. James Parish Government recognizes the need for communication with private and corporate landowners in impacted areas and accepts the responsibility to repair damages that may be sustained from this effort. Parish President Dufresne states “flood protection remains a priority of this administration, while continuing to find ways to improve the quality of life for all residents. I authorize the St. James Parish Operations Director to identify, mobilize, and provide equipment, resources, and employ contractors necessary to alleviate the hazards and ensure that this project is a success.”

In conducting this infrastructure assessment, Operations Director Rick Webre adds that many of the major channels have severe blockages, vegetation growth, and other impediments preventing the flow of waters. The concern is that these waterways are in such dire need of attention to function properly that flooding could occur

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with just an average rain event. The Parish is working towards a long-term solution for gaining access to all the ditches and canals that need to be maintained for the overall drainage function of St. James Parish.

Questions may be directed to the St. James Parish Operations Department at (225) 562-2444.

**STAY CONNECTED:** Please sign-up for St. James Parish Government Everbridge Notification Alerts by visiting [www.stjamesparishla.gov](http://www.stjamesparishla.gov) to receive community and/or emergency alerts.

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