



Photo credit: www.shieldfirst.com/

The levee failures in New Orleans a few years ago — the picture is to help refresh your recollection in case you’ve forgotten about them — put the spotlight on some major deficiencies in the operation of the Army Corp of Engineers. According to [E&E News](#), lawmakers are complaining that the Corp has failed to heed legislative mandates for reform:

“Three of the most significant of these programmatic reforms, independent peer review, safety assurance review, and mitigation reforms, became effective upon enactment,” the lawmakers wrote to Jo-Ellen Darcy, assistant Army secretary for civil works. “We are extremely concerned that almost two years later, little progress has been made to implement these critical reforms.”

I’ve actually met the head of the Corps, who seemed smart and committed to organizational change. (A bit to my embarrassment, he remembered an article that I co-authored which was quite critical of the Corps, though he was tactful about it.) I’m sure that he’s not the only one in the Corps who wants change. But whether these individual good intentions will translate into real organizational change remains to be seen. Part of the problem is that Congress itself is hard to reform, and water projects are every legislator’s favorite little pork barrel.