

STEVE WATKINS, MAYOR  
NAOMI SHEPHERD, CITY CLERK



ALDERMAN:  
JOE BROOKS, WARD 1  
BRIDGETT M. PETERS, WARD 2  
RONALD HOLLOWAY, WARD 3  
STEVE NEELY, WARD 4  
HARRY WHEAT III, AT-LARGE

August 2, 2023

FAX: 601-359-3741  
Email: [governor@govreeves.ms.gov](mailto:governor@govreeves.ms.gov)  
USPS: Certified Mail No. 7019 2970 0001 0553 4807, Return Receipt Requested

The Honorable Tate Reeves  
Governor of the State of Mississippi  
550 High Street  
Sillers Building, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Jackson, MS 39201

RE: City of Quitman - Emergency Declaration  
Pat Harrison Waterway District  
Archusa Creek Water Park - Archusa Creek Lake  
Earthen Dam Collapse - Emergency Spillway Breakup

Dear Governor Reeves:

Last evening, on Tuesday, August 1, 2023, I presented the enclosed, "**City of Quitman Resolution of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen Declaring a City Emergency**", to the Board of Aldermen for their review and approval. This action was taken in response to the July 16, 2023 collapse of the earthen dam and the destruction of the emergency spillway of the 450 acre Archusa Creek Lake, located within the Archusa Creek Water Park, in the City of Quitman, Mississippi. Archusa Creek Water Park is part of the Pat Harrison Waterway District, the Mississippi Agency which oversees and manages Archusa Creek Water Park. As a result of this fateful event, the City of Quitman, Clarke County and Pat Harrison Waterway District face enormous challenges until this situation is rectified. I have enclosed pictures depicting the breadth of this damage in our community and I am seeking your immediate assistance and support.

In conjunction with the City of Quitman's Emergency Declaration, I am requesting your help for Pat Harrison Waterway District by having your office issue a State Emergency or Disaster Declaration which is a prerequisite for them to access assistance from certain governmental agency's programs. Pat Harrison Waterway District needs your declaration to acquire full access of all available governmental

Visit Our Website: [www.cityquitman.net](http://www.cityquitman.net)  
POST OFFICE BOX 16 • 101 E. CHURCH STREET • QUITMAN, MISSISSIPPI 39355-0016  
PHONE: 601.776.3728 • FAX: 601.776.4016  
*"A Great Place To Live, Work, and Play"*

programs for engineering and reconstruction assistance. Your declaration will make all the difference in opening the door for the much needed in depth discussions, engineering recommendations and strategic planning that must take place prior to the Mississippi Legislature returning in January to structure funding for this emergency rebuild.

Additionally, as set forth in the afore mentioned City of Quitman Resolution, all fishing, boating, swimming and skiing activities in this 450 acre recreational lake, within the City of Quitman, are non-existent due to the damage inflicted on the earthen dam and emergency spillway. As a result of the drastic reduction in the number of individuals and families visiting and staying at Archusa Creek Water Park, our businesses are already suffering from significant decreases in revenue and the City of Quitman will also suffer these same significant decreases in sales tax revenue. As you are aware, the loss of some 90,000 visitors to Quitman (Clarke County) each year is catastrophic. Unfortunately, there will be no improvement in this adverse economic impact until the earthen dam and emergency spillway are reconstructed and Archusa Creek Water Park returns as an essential component of Quitman's business community. A State Emergency or Disaster Declaration issued from the Governor's Office, will ensure that maximum effort is applied to solving this crisis and ending the time of suffering, sooner rather than later.

If you or your staff require any further explanation or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is [swatkins@ci.quitman.ms.us](mailto:swatkins@ci.quitman.ms.us), my desk phone is 601-776-4002, and my cell phone is 601-934-9140.

Warmest Regards,



Steve Watkins, Mayor  
City of Quitman, Mississippi

Cc: Hiram Boone, Executive Director, Pat Harrison Waterway District  
Senator Jeff Tate, Mississippi Senate  
Representative Troy Smith, Mississippi House of Representatives  
Senator Roger Wicker, United States Senate  
Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, United States Senate  
Congressman Michael Guest, United States House of Representatives

Enclosures: As stated





**CITY OF QUITMAN RESOLUTION OF THE  
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN  
DECLARING A CITY EMERGENCY**

**In response to the:  
Collapse of the earthen dam and  
Destruction of the emergency spillway  
Of Archusa Creek Lake, located within the  
Archusa Creek Water Park, in Quitman, Mississippi**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Quitman is a municipal corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Mississippi with a population of 2,061 citizens as determined in the 2020 Census by the United States Census Bureau;

**WHEREAS**, the Pat Harrison Waterway District is the Mississippi Agency which oversees and manages the Archusa Creek Water Park accommodating as many as 90,000 guests per year according to Pat Harrison Waterway District records;

**WHEREAS**, all boundaries of the Archusa Creek Water Park are located completely within the city limits of Quitman;

**WHEREAS**, the 450 acre Archusa Creek Lake is located within and comprises the majority acreage of Archusa Creek Water Park;

**WHEREAS**, the Archusa Creek Water Park offers public amenities that include boat launches, boat rentals, fishing, water skiing, jet skiing, swimming areas, primitive camp sites, cabins, RV camping, picnic areas, hiking, frisbee golf, and meeting facilities;

**WHEREAS**, during the late afternoon hours of Sunday, July 16, 2023, a portion of the Archusa Creek Lake earthen dam collapsed on the west end of the emergency spillway causing a breach and breakup of the emergency spillway, bringing about the complete discharge of all water held in Archusa Creek Lake;

**WHEREAS**, the collapse of the earthen dam and destruction of the emergency spillway of Archusa Creek Lake is solely responsible for drastically decreasing the number of individuals and

families visiting and staying at the Archusa Creek Water Park until the earthen dam and emergency spillway are reconstructed;

**WHEREAS**, the businesses of the City of Quitman benefit greatly from and are dependent upon the influx of visitors from outside the area, consistently visiting and remaining overnight at Archusa Creek Water Park throughout the entire year;

**WHEREAS**, with the volume of visitors virtually coming to a standstill at Archusa Creek Water Park, practically every business in the City of Quitman, in one way or another, is suffering greatly from the devastating loss of revenue from those who would normally be visiting at Archusa Creek Water Park and remaining overnight, sometimes, for weeks on end;

**WHEREAS**, with this catastrophic drop in city-wide revenue, the City of Quitman's Municipal Government will subsequently experience a detrimental loss of sales tax revenue collected from those businesses operating within the City of Quitman;

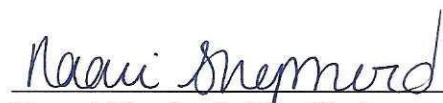
**WHEREAS**, this adverse economic impact on the City of Quitman is substantially growing worse with each passing day;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF QUITMAN, MISSISSIPPI**, that a **CITY EMERGENCY** is hereby declared due to the economic hardship being imposed on the City of Quitman until such time as Pat Harrison Waterway District receives the necessary state and federal assistance for the planning and reconstruction of the Archusa Creek Lake earthen dam and emergency spillway, allowing Archusa Creek Water Park to return as an essential component of Quitman's business community.

Alderman Harry Wheat made the motion, which was seconded by Alderman Steve Neely to adopt the foregoing Resolution, which was introduced in writing at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Board of Alderman of the City of Quitman, Mississippi, held on August 1, 2023, and was at said meeting, read, considered, and adopted, paragraph by paragraph, then as a whole, and the question being put to a vote, the result was as follows:

Alderman Joe Brooks	ABSENT
Alderwoman Bridgett Peters	AYE
Alderman Ron Holloway	AYE
Alderman Steve Neely	AYE
Alderman Harry Wheat	AYE

APPROVED, this the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2023.

  
Naomi Shepherd, City Clerk

  
Mayor Steve Watkins







