

MaryJane Shimsky

Majority Whip, Legislator, 12th District
Chair, Committee on Public Works



Committee Assignments:
Appointments
Environment, Health & Energy
Law & Major Contracts
Legislation
Parks, Planning & Economic Development
Public Safety
Seniors & Constituencies
Social Services

MEMORANDUM

TO: Benjamin Boykin, Chair, Board of Legislators
FROM: MaryJane Shimsky, Legislator – 12th District
DATE: August 22, 2019
RE: CNN/“New Orleans Inspected a Drainage Tunnel after a Recent Flood. Officials Found at Least One Car Inside.”/August 21, 2019/Ryan Prior

Please add the attached *article* to the Budget & Appropriations; Environment, Health & Energy; and Public Safety agendas.

New Orleans Inspected a Drainage Tunnel after a Recent Flood. Officials Found at Least One Car Inside.

Ryan Prior

August 21, 2019

(CNN) — There's at least one entire car sitting in a drainage tunnel in New Orleans.

That was a surprise find announced Tuesday, after inspectors from the [Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans](#) sent an amphibious vehicle with a camera into an underground canal in the middle of the city.

Last month water flowed out over the top of the city's Lafitte Canal during a heavy rainstorm. Delving into possible reasons for the flooding, inspectors sent the camera down to take a look.

They found debris strewn all about, including an “overturned car partially blocking the flow of water,” according to a press release.

New Orleans floods frequently for a [host of reasons](#), including being built on low ground, soil issues, and rising tides caused by the global climate crisis.

Preventing flooding is key to the city's long-term survival. Ghassan Korban, the board's executive director, has made fixing the city's drainage system a top priority.

But even inspecting a few miles of the underground portion of Lafitte Canal carries a \$100,000 price —a heavy burden for the board's budget.

“While we are committed to finding out what we don't know, conducting these types of inspections is extremely costly,” Korban said in the press release.

One reason for the car, and other debris, is that the Lafitte Canal has both open and underground portions, making it easier for large objects to get parked inside and block the flow of water.

Legislator Shimsky Agenda Submission:

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“Understanding the full condition and capabilities of the drainage system continues to be a top priority of our new administration,” the board said.

To help keep New Orleans above water for the long term, Korban says he and his team are working now to map out all the existing issues in the city's water, sewerage, and drainage infrastructure.

And they say just one of many items on that agenda is “aggressively exploring all options” to get the car, or cars, out of the tunnel.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/21/weather/new-orleans-car-drainage-tunnel-trnd/index.html>