

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**



From

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To

The Superintending Engineer,
Palar Basin circle ,
Chepauk, Chennai-5.

Lr.No. EE / AE / F-Okkiyam Maduvu / 2025 / Dated: 07.11.2025.

Sir,

Sub : WRD- Construct a Straight Cut Flood Escape Channel from South Buckingham Canal near Okkiyam Maduvu to Sea in Chennai District for flood relief to fringe areas around Pallikaranai Swamp –Complaint regarding violation of Environmental Norms and Regulations-Detailed Report sought- reg.

Ref : 1. Letter No.S7(1)/68809/MISC/OT5/2021-1, dated.29.10.2025
2. Member Secretary/TNSCZMA & Director, DoE&cc Letter No. P1/1534/2025TA GIS, dated.27.09.2025

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The detailed report was sought based on the complaint raised regarding the WRD has commenced the work "Construction of Straight Cut Flood Escape Channel from South Buckingham Canal near Okkiyam Maduvu to Sea in Chennai District for flood relief to fringe areas around Pallikaranai Swamp" by violating the norms and regulations of Environmental and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ). In this connection, the detailed report along with the present status of work is furnished below based on the ground truthing.

The South Chennai city, specifically Velachery, Perungudi, Pallikaranai, Perumbakkam and Semmenchery areas are highly vulnerable to frequent flooding. This is due to the fact that the Pallikaranai Swamp, which is the only wetland available within the Chennai City, absorbs flood

water from its upstream areas and drains into the Buckingham Canal through Okkiyam Maduvu. The reason for flooding is found to be inadequate discharge capacity of Buckingham Canal flowing towards the Muttukadu outlet for a length of 13km. Also, the ground level of residential areas in and around the Pallikaranai Swamp being in the range of (+)2.500m to (+)3.500m, which is much lower than the Highest Flood Level (HFL) of Swamp (+)3.750m marooning the low level areas for the prolonged time and affecting the day to day lives of people.

It is to be noted that the Buckingham Canal is a Man-made navigational canal formed during the British era, where its hydraulic performance is highly dependent on the prevailing tide conditions such that the adequate depth will be maintained to facilitate the movement of boats and vessels to convey the Cargo and passengers. Since it is a tidal canal and also exposed to the River confluences and sea outlets, it is highly affected by the siltation of rivers during the Monsoon season requiring high maintenance cost to desilt the canal bed. Though the Canal has now completely lost the interests of navigation, but still it acts as an important flood carrier canal for the entire Chennai city.

The recent rapid change in the land use pattern in the catchment of Pallikaranai Swamp has resulted in the increased runoff and conversion of fallow lands into developments has further aggravated the flooding, since all these fallow lands were once facilitated the runoff as sheet flow. Further, to reduce the localized inundation, the missing links between the waterbodies were now being channelized with the Flood carrier drains bringing additional inflow to the Swamp at a very short period of time. The performance of all these major channels and urban storm water drains were dependent on the swamp water level. Hence, it is highly imperative and need of the hour to focus on improving the outflow from the Pallikaranai swamp such that the flood level of Swamp can be reduced.

With this scope and objective, the Government of Tamil Nadu vide G.O.(D) No.69, Water Resources (I.Spl.2) Department, Dated: 20.06.2025 has accorded the administrative sanction for the work "Construction of Straight Cut Flood Escape Channel from South Buckingham Canal near Okkiyam Maduvu to Sea in Chennai District for flood relief to fringe areas around Pallikaranai Swamp." The proposed project is aimed to divert portion of flood water from the Buckingham Canal directly to Sea through a flood carrier Drain along the VGP 2nd Main Road in Uthandi Village in Sholinganallur taluk of Chennai district. The structural components of the project include Construction of a Head Regulator adjacent to the Buckingham Canal and formation of Flood carrier drain under the Road alignment for a length of 1100m upto Uthandi beach.

Present status of work

The project preparatory works such as DGPS Survey of the alignment, establishment of Bench Marks by N.I.O.T, Geo-technical investigations were carried out and necessary clearance from Indian Maritime University was obtained for accessing the project site. Since the overall area of the project construction is 8800Sqm, the EIA Notification, 2006 is not applicable and the project does not require the Environmental Clearance. However, the project site at the Buckingham Canal and exit at Uthandi beach falls in the CRZ boundary, the CRZ clearance is necessary for work execution and subsequently, a preliminary application for CRZ was filed on 15.09.2025. Meanwhile, the works such as alignment fixation and construction of Head Regulator portion was commenced with initial activity by keeping the buffer distance of 15m from the Buckingham canal, which was thought to be believed as Non-CRZ area. Thereafter, by engaging the Institute of Remote Sensing, Anna University to prepare the basic level CRZ mapping, it was seen that the some co-ordinates of the project area falls in the category of CRZ-II (HTL to 500m at the seafront & HTL to 100m/ width of creek whichever is lower).

At this juncture, upon knowing the work commenced portion of Head Regulator falls in the CRZ-II boundary, the entire work was immediately stopped in the site and no further will be taken up until the CRZ clearance is obtained for the said project. Apart from the Head Regulator portion, no other works in both CRZ and non CRZ areas were started without any violation of Environmental norms and regulations. At present, the application for CRZ clearance is to be submitted to DCZMA for getting the CRZ clearance. This is for kind information and further necessary action please.

5/2/2025
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