

2011-0278

INTRODUCED BY: DENNIS NUSS, COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT VII
CAROLYN K. SCHEXNAYDRE, COUNCILWOMAN-AT-LARGE, DIVISION A
TERRY AUTHEMENT, COUNCILMAN-AT-LARGE, DIVISION B
BILLY RAYMOND, SR., COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT I
SHELLEY M. TASTET, COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT II
WENDY BENEDETTO, COUNCILWOMAN, DISTRICT III
PAUL J. HOGAN, PE, COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT IV
LARRY COCHRAN, COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT V
MARCUS M. LAMBERT, COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT VI
V.J. ST. PIERRE, JR., PARISH PRESIDENT

RESOLUTION NO. 5846

A resolution requesting that the Gulf Ecosystem Restoration Task Force ("Task Force"), currently led by EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and Executive Director John Hankinson, include in their strategic restoration strategy to be submitted to the President of the United States, the recognition that current land loss rates in Coastal Louisiana indicate that this is a "crisis" and make specific recommendations on changes to current federal processes to streamline and improve the permitting process required for coastal restoration efforts.

- WHEREAS, on June 1, 2011, the U.S. Geological Survey ("USGS") released its report "Land Area Change in Coastal Louisiana from 1932-2010" (USGS Report), which calculated and quantified net land loss and gain rates in coastal Louisiana for the past 80 years; and,
- WHEREAS, the USGS Report determined that since 1932 coastal Louisiana has sustained a net land loss of over 1,883 square miles, which accounts for a loss of 25% of all land in the affected region, for which a copy of the land loss map is attached; and,
- WHEREAS, the USGS Report determined that trend analysis indicates that current wetland loss occurs at a rate of 16.57 square miles a year-equating to Louisiana's losing an area the size of a football field every hour; and,
- WHEREAS, although Louisiana contains approximately 40% of all coastal habitat in the lower 48 states, it accounts for 90% of coastal land loss; and,
- WHEREAS, the devastation and destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike reinforced the tenet that a healthy, vibrant, and workable coast is necessary not just for our cultural and economic well-being but is vital to our overall hurricane protection needs; and,
- WHEREAS, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the largest environmental disaster in the United States, placed again the spotlight on Louisiana's coast and our impending land loss crisis; and,
- WHEREAS, as a result of the BP oil spill, President Barack Obama created the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force to create a federal restoration strategy to address the Gulf Coast's environmental issues, with particular emphasis being placed on Louisiana's coastal land loss crisis; and,
- WHEREAS, it is hoped and anticipated that 80% or more of Clean Water Act fines levied against BP and other responsible parties will be directed back to the areas affected to be used for coastal restoration and other initiatives, potentially billions of dollars for environmental restoration efforts; and,
- WHEREAS, even if the Task Force's recommendation to direct oil spill fines back to the Gulf Coast for restoration purposes is implemented, a vital component necessary for the efficient and timely restoration of our coast is the streamlining of the permitting process; and,
- WHEREAS, the current processes that dictate the permitting and approval of projects that are intended to restore and protect Louisiana's coast must follow the same arduous processes for a project that has no net benefit for coastal restoration/hurricane protection purposes; and,
- WHEREAS, even though there is agreement that Louisiana coastal land loss is at crisis levels, federal prioritization of coastal projects over other initiatives has not been fully realized.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE ST. CHARLES PARISH COUNCIL, do hereby respectfully request that the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force recognize and make recommendations in their strategic restoration strategy on the following:

Recognize that current and historical land loss in coastal Louisiana confirms that Louisiana is in a crisis in which emergency action must be taken; and,

Recognize that because Louisiana land loss rates are at crisis levels, the current emergency should be met with an appropriate level of federal response and addressed with a sense of urgency; and,

Recommend in their strategic restoration strategy that the permitting and processing of coastal restoration projects be given a higher priority and fast-tracked by all participating agencies; and,

Recommend in their strategic restoration strategy that appropriate resources and personnel be specifically allocated from each participating agency whose focus is to assist in the efficient processing of permits for coastal restoration projects; and,


Recommend in their strategic restoration strategy that permitting processes for coastal restoration projects be granted "alternative arrangements" authorization, or similar processes, that was provided by the White House's Council on Environmental Quality to the Army Corps of Engineers for their work on the greater New Orleans' Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) projects, which allows for the fast-track implementation and "mitigation after the fact".

The foregoing resolution having been submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: SCHEXNAYDRE, AUTHEMENT, RAYMOND, TASTET, BENEDETTO,
HOGAN, COCHRAN, LAMBERT, NUSS
NAYS: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

And the resolution was declared adopted this 22nd day of August, 2011, to become effective five (5) days after publication in the Official Journal.

Ecosystem Task Force

CHAIRMAN: 

SECRETARY: 

DLVD/PARISH PRESIDENT: August 23, 2011

APPROVED: _____ DISAPPROVED: _____

PARISH PRESIDENT: 

RETD/SECRETARY: August 24, 2011

AT: 10:00 AM RECD BY: 