



## *State of Louisiana*

### **The State of Louisiana Announces The Water Institute as Center of Excellence**

BATON ROUGE, LA., April 2, 2014 – The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) has announced The Water Institute of the Gulf will serve as Louisiana’s Center of Excellence to administer research grant funds that CPRA anticipates receiving as a result of the Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability, Tourism Opportunities and Revived Economy of the Gulf Coast Act of 2011 (RESTORE Act).

The RESTORE Act allocates eighty percent of all Clean Water Act penalties paid by those responsible for the 2010 gulf oil disaster to Gulf Coast restoration activities. Two and one-half percent of these funds and twenty-five percent of the interest earned will be granted to the Gulf Coast states in equal shares for the purpose of establishing research Centers of Excellence. States include Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

Research conducted by Louisiana’s Center of Excellence will focus on issues pertinent to Louisiana with an emphasis on advancing Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan.

Proposals for the Center of Excellence were solicited through a competitive process. The Water Institute’s proposed approach includes a strong collaboration with Louisiana’s public and private higher education research universities, including Louisiana State University, the University of New Orleans, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Tulane University, Nicholls State University, Xavier University, Louisiana Tech University, and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium.

“We look forward to working with The Water Institute and its team on this incredibly important effort,” said Jerome Zeringue, Chairman of the CPRA. “The research conducted by this Center of Excellence will be critical in advancing our understanding of the coast and will be used to inform decision-making with the best available science and engineering in mind as we work expeditiously to protect and restore our coast.”

As the Center of Excellence, The Water Institute, in collaboration with its partners and with input from key stakeholders and the public, will develop and implement the Center of Excellence program. This will include the development of a research strategy, administration of a competitive grant program that rewards the best and most relevant research proposals, and management of performance and success metrics.

“We are thrilled by the opportunity that this presents for The Water Institute and our team of researchers, but we are also excited about the potential value the Center of Excellence can provide by bringing together the best researchers around the state to identify and focus on the key research issues needed to advance the state’s Coastal Master Plan,” said Chip Groat, President and CEO of The Water Institute. “This sort of collaboration among members of Louisiana’s academic and research community is unprecedented, and we look forward to utilizing this model to effectively address the key coastal research needs across our coast.”

The final designation is contingent upon the finalization of U.S. Department of the Treasury RESTORE Act regulations.

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