COUNCIL APPROVES $52 MILLION FOR COASTAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

IN LOUISIANA

Today, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council voted to approve the *Initial Funded Priorities List (FPL)* pursuant to the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act). The FPL includes funding for seven projects in Louisiana totaling approximately $52 million.

The Coastal Master Plan projects receiving funding include:

- Golden Triangle Marsh Creation Project ($4.3 million; planning)
- Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project ($14.2 million; planning)
- Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline Project ($3.2 million; planning)
- West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization Project ($7.3 million; planning)
- Lowermost Mississippi River Management Program ($9.3 million; planning)

Two additional projects, Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling ($8.7 million; implementation) and Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh and Hydrologic Restoration ($5.2 million; planning) are also located in Louisiana. These two projects, submitted for funding by federal members of the Council, are complementary to and consistent with the master plan and will directly benefit coastal Louisiana.

"We are very pleased that the Council has achieved this important milestone," said Chip Kline, executive assistant to the governor for coastal activities. "Additionally, we greatly appreciate the public's input and participation in this effort to secure funding to advance key priorities for ecosystem restoration. We are also pleased that there are two projects proposed by federal Council members that directly benefit coastal Louisiana. We believe this is a step in the right direction toward restoring the long term health of coastal Louisiana and the Gulf Coast region.

"While the accomplishments of today are very significant, we are also looking forward to the next iteration of the funded priorities list. Efforts leading to today have established a strong

foundation to build on as we focus our efforts on the future funded priorities list, which will include significantly larger projects and project lists that reflect the full amount available to be spent for restoration activities."

In addition to voting on the FPL, the Council also voted to approve the Spill Impact Component Rule. The approval will direct nearly 35 percent of funding allocated to this component of the RESTORE Act from both the Transocean settlement ($244.8 million) and the Clean Water Act civil penalties outlined in the proposed consent decree with BP ($1.32 billion) to Louisiana, resulting in approximately $541 million for the coastal program. The rule will become effective once the consent decree is finalized. Upon finalization funds currently available from the Transocean settlement, amounting to almost $85 million, will become accessible for projects included in the state's multiyear implementation plan. While funding related to the oil spill will be spent on these and future projects along the Louisiana coast, much has already been accomplished for protection, restoration and sustainability. During the past eight years the State of Louisiana has secured $18 billion for protection and restoration, using that money to build or improve approximately 264 miles of levees, construct 45 miles of barrier islands and berms, and to benefit more than 27,000 acres of coastal habitat. Improvements to the hurricane protection system around greater metropolitan New Orleans have made that area better protected today than at any time in its history. Since 2008, the state's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), has overseen projects in 20 coastal-zone parishes, and has pioneered the use of dredged material pumped via pipeline over long distances to rebuild and benefit inland and coastal marsh environments and barrier islands.