



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 20, 2020

Contact: coastal@la.gov

Gov. Edwards Announces Second Term Coastal Priorities

BATON ROUGE, LA — Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced his ambitious priorities for the state's coastal program for his next four years in office. Gov. Edwards also announced the state will receive its maximum payment from the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) for the first time. In addition, he committed at least \$115 million in state surplus dollars to the coastal fund which will bring CPRA's planned expenditures for FY21 over \$1 billion for the first time in state history.

Secretaries from the Departments of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Fisheries, Environmental Quality, Louisiana Economic Development, Transportation and Development, Louisiana Workforce Commission, and Public Safety and Corrections joined Gov. Edwards, and CPRA Board Chairman Chip Kline at the LSU Center for River Studies to support the introduction of his second term coastal priorities, each of which depend on cross-agency collaboration for their success.

"Over the next four years, CPRA will be investing nearly \$1 billion per year in the implementation of some of the most important projects in the Coastal Master Plan," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. "But in order for us to make the most of the opportunities presented by our changing coast and be as successful as possible, we will be redoubling our efforts to collaborate across state government agencies and across the economy. Only through a unified approach resulting from productive partnerships are we going to achieve a Louisiana that is resilient and sustainable economically and environmentally."

Gov. Edwards second-term coastal priorities include:

1. Building resilience and establishing a *Climate Initiatives Task Force*
2. Pursuing a more integrated approach to the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers
3. Pursuing initiatives that will ensure a sustainable oyster industry
4. Growing, diversifying, and protecting the economy through investments in coastal protection and restoration and coordinated advocacy
5. Establishing the Coastal Innovation and Collaboration Hub to focus expertise and share knowledge

“Each of these policy initiatives is designed to address a significant problem facing coastal Louisiana in new ways through strategic partnerships and enhanced information sharing,” said CPRA Chairman Chip Kline. “The problems we face are complex. Through coordinated, integrated action, we can turn these challenges into opportunities to better restore and protect our coast.”

Building resilience and establishing a Climate Initiatives Task Force

Gov. Edwards announced two executive orders to support a broadened state approach to addressing the coastal crisis. The first established a chief resilience officer tasked with integrating Coastal Master Plan data into the decision-making of other state agencies to better identify vulnerabilities and improve the state’s ability to seize opportunities that present themselves when proactively and holistically addressing coastal change.

The second executive order, to be released in the near future, will establish a *Climate Initiatives Task Force* that will be charged with reviewing existing emissions data to quantify the amount of achievable emissions reduction by industry and through investments in the conservation and restoration of our coast, evaluating opportunities for incentives to stimulate technological advancements, and recommending a suite of balanced policy solutions that can reduce Louisiana’s greenhouse gas emissions while appreciating Louisiana’s economic and energy profile.

Pursuing a more integrated approach to the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers

Through several new policy initiatives, Louisiana will work explicitly to more holistically manage the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers to integrate the goals of flood protection, ecosystem restoration, navigation, water quality, and fisheries habitat. Efforts announced include the establishment of a task force on the future management of the Atchafalaya Basin; the commitment of millions of dollars between CPRA and LDWF to promote and maintain a thriving oyster resource and industry in Louisiana; a renewed commitment to reducing nutrient pollution into the Mississippi River; and pursuing strategies with the USACE and DOTD to better manage the lower river to achieve navigation, flood control, and ecosystem restoration goals.

Growing, diversifying, and protecting the economy through investments in coastal protection and restoration and coordinated advocacy

Partnerships between CPRA, LED, LWC, and DOC will provide opportunities for Louisiana businesses, workers, and formerly incarcerated job-seekers to better connect to the contracting and employment opportunities associated with the implementation of Coastal Master Plan projects. The State’s investments in the Coastal Master Plan will make us safer and more resilient, but also represent an opportunity to equitably grow local economies, build an inclusive coastal restoration and water management industry, and diversify the economies of our coastal region.

The Flood Insurance subcommittee of the CPRA Board will work over the coming term to advocate for a long-term federal reauthorization of the NFIP, to raise Louisiana as a key player in the national conversation, and to form valuable partnerships with other at-risk states, the most at-risk communities here at home and federal agencies like FEMA who have an outsized role in the economic security of our coastal communities.

Establishing the Coastal Innovation and Collaboration Hub to focus expertise and share knowledge

Through the establishment of Louisiana's Coastal Innovation and Collaboration Hub at the Water Institute of the Gulf the state can gather the expertise that is currently disbursed across government, universities, nonprofits, communities, and private firms into a single focal point for collaboration. This hub will be the home of a model repository that will provide access to researchers and technical experts to the models and databases.

Gov. Edwards also named Charles Sutcliffe as Louisiana's first chief resilience officer.

To review the draft project list for GOMESA, click [here](#). To review the draft project list for 2019 State Surplus, click [here](#).

###