
COASTAL PROTECTION AND RESTORATION AUTHORITY 2022 COASTAL ANNUAL PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY ZOOM
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA
FEBRUARY 22, 2021

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IN ATTENDANCE:
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    REPRESENTING CPRA:
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    BREN HAAS
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    RACHEL HANEY
    ELIZABETH SHOENFELT
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    GREG GRANDY
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    CHUCK PERRODIN
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    STACY ORTEGO
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    Morgan City, Louisiana
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    REPRESENTING THE COALITION - MOVE THE MINDSET:
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OTHERS PRESENT:
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    GREG LINSCOMBE
    Gueydan, Louisiana
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    REPRESENTING BRIDGE THE GULF PROJECT:
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    MICHAEL TRITICO
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1	INDEX
2	
3	PRESENTATION OF 2022 COASTAL PLAN BY BREN HAASE
4	
5	
6	QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/STATEMENTS:
7	
8	BY JENNIFER MOUTON
9	
10	BY REP. BOURRIAQUE
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
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2022 COASTAL ANNUAL PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

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MR. HAASE:

Good evening, everyone. This is Bren Haase with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

Mark, I see you. Could I implore you to give me a thumbs up if you hear me? I see you're waiving, so it looks like we're good on audio. Thank you for that assist.

Why don't I just open up by saying that we understand that a lot of the state, and particularly the southwestern part of the state, are -- are still recovering from the extreme weather event that we experienced last -- last week, and understand that that's been another hardship on the southwestern part of our state, on top of the devastating hurricane season that we had this summer. So I just want -- want the citizens of the southwest to know that our -- our thoughts and prayers are with you, and we certainly are -- are hoping for a speedy recovery from last week's events and, of course, this summer as well, and certainly are standing by to do anything we can to assist in that manner.

Michelle S. Abadie, CCR
Certified Court Reporter

I also want to note that it looks like we are

joined this evening by Representative Bourriaque, and we want to thank him for his attendance. We appreciate, certainly, his interest and support -- longstanding support of the Coastal program.

So we are -- I'm going to turn this over quickly to Rachel Haney, our Outreach Director, who is going to talk with y'all about how to provide public comment through the presentation today, and -- and also subsequent to today's presentation. And then I'll come back and join you and -- and present this year's draft, Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Plan. So, bear with us as we change seats. I'm going to turn this over to Rachel, and then I'll step back in. Thank you.

MS. HANEY:

All right. I'm going to quickly go over some guidelines before we get started tonight, since we're doing things a little differently.

In accordance with State law and the Governor's Emergency Proclamations related to COVID-19, we're holding this meeting virtually this year. Because we're using Webex, public comments will be accepted a little differently. You may submit a public comment regarding the Draft Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Plan via the chat feature, which is in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. Please include your name and

address in your chat message, and at the end of the presentation, those messages will be read into the record. The same thing with email, if you would like to email your comment instead, you can do that at coastal@la.gov throughout the meeting. We will email -- I mean, we will read those comments in at the end of the meeting. 7

Written comments, as you can see on the screen, will be accepted to CPRA at 150 Terrace Avenue, Baton Rouge, 70802. All comments must be received no later than March 27th.

with that, I'll turn it back over to Bren. Thank you.

MR. HAASE:

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All right, folks. Well, thank you for -- for joining us again this evening. This is a little unusual, but, obviously, we would prefer to be with y'all in person. Typically, we would hold an open house with some materials, have a chance to -- to talk to our coastal stakeholders and those interested in the Annual Plan, but, unfortunately, as we all are still dealing with the pandemic, we have shifted to virtual meetings in most cases, and, certainly, this is no exception.

So we'll -- we will jump right into it, and,

certainly, hope that next year we will be able to be with you in person again. Let's see. It's not advancing here. There we go. All right. So we'll jump right into it.

So what is the Annual Plan; what is our Draft Annual Plan? Well, it's -- it's really a request to spend monies, should they become available to us, over the next fiscal year. And it's a three-year outlook. It's not just looking at the upcoming fiscal year, fiscal year '22, and we look -- we look out over that three-year period projecting our revenues and our expenditures and -- and disclose to y'all -- disclose to the public where we intend to spend those revenues (unintelligible).

So there's a project activity portion of this and an implementation schedule that's included in the Annual Plan Draft document.

And why we do it, it's just pretty straightforward. Of course, we do it to comply with the law. We're required to develop this each year and to present it to our board for approval and then ultimately to the legislature for approval by them.

So the Draft Plan was released last week and presented to our board on Friday morning, February 19th. We will be accepting public comment, not just

here tonight, but through March 27th, in those -- in the manner in which Rachel explained just a little while ago.

I think this public comment will address the Annual Plan as needed based on the public input and its comments and present a final plan to our board on April 21st -- 21st -- excuse me -- and then we will, subsequent to that meeting, and, ultimately, we hope approval by the board, will submit the plan to the legislature.

So the virtual meeting hearings that you see that calendar there, of course, we're here with you tonight concentrating on the southwestern portion of the state. Tomorrow evening, we will be doing the same presentation with a concentration on the southcentral portion of the state, and then Wednesday evening, we will be doing the same presentation again with an emphasis on the southeast portion of the state. All of these meetings will begin at 6:00, and you can find the link for each of them the same place you found the link for this one at coastal.la.gov/calendar.

So funding really are sort of organized into -into four main bullets. Again, I want to emphasize
all of the revenues and expenditures that are laid out
in the Annual Plan are -- are projections.

But the first bullet you see here is State
Mineral Revenues, and so, while we don't receive any
State general funds (unintelligible), we do receive
some revenue stream from mineral income that comes to
the State.

There's some recurring federal funds that come to the State, as well. Most of us are familiar with the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act. That comes to us in -- by way, essentially, of a federal reimbursement, so we have to front money for those projects, and then the federal program reimburses us for those expenditures.

And then the GOMESA, or Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, funds.

There's some significant funds, as most of you are aware, that have come to us through the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement, that's the NRDA, NFWF, and RESTORE. NRDA stands for the Natural Resources Damage Assessment -- Damage Assessment Act, if you will. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is NFWF, and then the RESTORE Act is a -- is a third portion of funds that are all tied to that oil spill settlement.

Then we also receive some one-time funds and -- and funds through various programs, like CDBG, or Community Development Block Grant funds, and then

coastal expenditures are one of the expenditures that are eligible for the expenditure to be used -- to use State surplus funds. And so, in the past, when we've been fortunate to have State surpluses, some of those funds have come to the State, and we've been able to use those for Coastal Protection and Restoration projects.

In terms of those funding programs that I mentioned, you'll see those listed on the left-hand row in this figure on this slide. You see the projected revenues and the projected expenditures in the next two columns, and note that all of those add up to roughly \$900 million for the upcoming fiscal year. Projected revenues and projected expenditures for FY '22 is about \$887 million.

And so this pie chart just shows you how those funds are expected to be broken out over various phases of projects. And so if you'd start at the 12 o'clock location on the pie chart, you'll see about one percent dedicated to planning or new projects, 11 percent to engineering and design, 71 percent of those funds are expected to be expended on construction, seven percent on operations and maintenance and monitoring of our projects, seven percent on ongoing programs and initiatives, and about three percent on

operating costs.

So, if you look at those projects -- or those funds that would be expended really specifically on projects, it's about 90 percent of the expected revenues and expenditures that we are anticipating for FY '22.

So there's seven projects in planning. There will be 66 projects that will be in construction over the next fiscal year. Those projects will benefit almost 60,000 acres of our coastal wetlands, about 122 miles of levees will be built with all those projects, as well.

In engineering and design, there will be 37 projects total in the upcoming fiscal year. Those would benefit a little over 60,000 acres of our coastal wetlands. We have about 161 projects in the operations, maintenance, and monitoring phase.

So, if you'll look at the southwest region, there are 11 projects active in this portion of the state, six of those are in construction and five of those are in engineering and design. So those projects include Cameron-Creole Freshwater Introduction Project; the Cameron Meadows Marsh Creation and Terracing Project; the South Grand Cheniere Marsh Creation Project; the Rockefeller Shoreline Protection Project, that's a

RESTORE Parish Matching project; the Freshwater Bayou Canal Shoreline Protection Project, and the Freshwater Bayou Shoreline Protection Project.

So just to highlight a few of those -- three of those I mentioned earlier, the Cameron Meadows Marsh Creation and Terracing Project, this is a Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act project. We're the local sponsor. Our federal partner on this project is -- is NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service. This project created about 319 acres of coastal wetlands, about 308 acres of marsh, and about ten or eleven acres of terraces. This is an ambitious project. We're borrowing material from the Gulf of Mexico and pumping it back to the coast to help rebuild the marshes in this area.

Another project that many of you, hopefully, have heard of and are interested in, in this portion of the state, is the Calcasieu Ship Channel Salinity Control Measures Project. By resolution of the board just this Friday, the name of that project actually will be changing and its focus will shift a bit, and it will be called the Calcasieu-Sabine Large Scale Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration Project. This is a project that's associated with the oil spill funding that is coming to the State. This is coming through

the RESTORE Council, RESTORE Act monies that I mentioned just a little while ago. And really the -- the focus of this project now will be lake rim marsh hydrologic restoration and large-scale marsh creation and nourishment throughout the -- the areas around the Calcasieu Lake.

The other project that I mentioned and will continue to mention is the Rockefeller Shoreline Protection Project. Again, this is a RESTORE Parish Matching project. This project will provide about almost \$9 million for shoreline protection along the Gulf, and it will add to two previous projects that have been constructed in this same region. So it will add about a mile of rock breakwaters that were uniquely designed to withstand kind of the poor soils in the area and the energy of the Gulf of Mexico, and it will expand the current length of shoreline protection in front of the Rockefeller Refuge to about five miles. So we're happy certainly to be a part of that project.

Moving to the east in the southcentral region of the state, there are 33 active projects, 22 of those are in construction; nine in E&D, engineering and design; and five of those are in planning. So these projects include a thing like the Bayou Chene Floodway

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Project (unintelligible) levee extension, East Grand Lake, that region is part of the Atchafalaya Basin Program east of the others that are listed here, as well.

So moving farther to the east, and we -- we compiled this really into one region, but this really is two. Kind of, typically, we think about the region west of the river and the region east of the river, but we've combined them on this one slide. these two regions, we've got 66 active projects, 38 in construction, 22 in engineering and design and we anticipate (unintelligible) upcoming fiscal year. a lot of projects, of course, on this slide being that it's -- it's a large -- large region that includes projects like the LaBranche East Marsh Creation Project, and, in addition, the LaBranche Marsh Creation Project, South Pass Bird Enhancement Project, St. Bernard Pump Station Repairs, Lake Lery Marsh Creation, and several others that I will not mention here.

So, as far as the annual planning process, we also go through an update of the Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plan. The project list, you see the projects on the map here, but you also see the list here, as well. I will say, and I'm not going to list in great

detail, there will be an Atchafalaya Basin Planspecific public meetings. The first one of those will
be this Thursday evening. The second one of those
will be next Monday evening. And the information and
so forth associated with those Atchafalaya Basin
Program-specific meetings can be found on our
calendar, as well.

But you can see the list of projects here,
Henderson Lake Water Management Unit Spoil Bank
Gapping Project, East Grand Lake Upper Region, Flat
Lake Study, Buffalo Cove Water Management Project,
Murphy Lake Depth Restoration, and smaller projects
associated with (unintelligible) access and recreation
in the area.

So I mentioned that this is -- not just a look at the next fiscal year, but a three-year outlook. And so if you look at the pie chart and the dollar figures associated with FY '23 and FY '24, you'll see a total expenditures expected in FY '23 of about \$930 million and \$1 billion in FY '24.

Another important thing to note here is that percent in construction we anticipate increasing over the next two fiscal years as well, so adding more dollars to projects on the ground. Certainly, that's moving in the direction that we want to be moving.

So I believe this is my final slide, so if you're 1 interested in providing some comments, I'd ask you to 2 get working, I guess, in the chat -- chat room there, 3 but right now, of course, as I mentioned, public 5 comments will be accepted through the 27th of March because you can read any of the information on the 6 Draft Plan at coastal.la.gov/OurPlan/AnnualPlan. 7 If you're interested in the Atchafalaya Basin 8 Annual Plan, that plan can be read at 9 coastal.la.gov/OurPlan/AtchafalayaBasinProgram. 10 I believe that is my last slide. I'll leave that 11 up so folks can take note of the web address there, 12 and that concludes my presentation. 13 So we will -- I'm going to step out of the seat 14 here. Chuck, do you want to -- you want to join me, 15 and we'll be happy to accept and read into the record 16 any public comments that you all care to make on the 17 Draft Plan at this time. 18 So thank you. 19 (BRIEF RECESS.) 20 MR. HAASE: 21 So, hey, everybody. We have received a question. 22 and, typically, we wouldn't answer questions during a 23 public -- or while accepting public comment, but I'll 24 address this one. It's a -- it's a good question.

> Michelle S. Abadie, CCR Certified Court Reporter

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It's from Jennifer Mouton, and it indicates that:

COMMENT/QUESTION BY JENNIFER MOUTON

READ BY MR. HAASE

The Annual Plan posted on the website shows nine projects in southwest, but the presentation mentioned 11. Can you explain the difference?

MR. HAASE:

Yes, I can. Two of those are really kind of on the border of what you would consider southwest or southcentral Louisiana. We just added them to the southwest map. So that's -- that's the reason for the difference there.

We made a couple of other differences that you -or changes that you may have noticed. We included the
southwest coastal nonstructural areas and marsh
creation areas, as well, so -- just part of that note
(phonetic) in the draft is -- is -- you know, is borne
through the -- the process of hearing questions and
comments from folks.

So I'm going to go back on mute. We -- I don't see any other comments, at least in the chat box right now. We're also monitoring the email address. So, if you have comments, we're going to give you some time to either enter those into the chat -- chat box, and then, obviously, if you'd like to send us an email, we

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will -- we will accept that. So I'm going to go back
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    on mute. We're going to stand by for probably five or
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    ten minutes before I come back on, and, again, if you
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    have any comments, please, feel free to provide those
    to us via chat or email.
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                   (BRIEF RECESS.)
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    MR. HAASE:
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         All right, everybody. We've gotten a request
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    from Representative Bourriaque to make a remark. So,
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    Representative Bourriaque, we're going to attempt to
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    unmute you here and allow you to speak.
11
           COMMENT BY REPRESENTATIVE RYAN BOURRIAQUE
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    REPRESENTATIVE BOURRIAQUE:
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         Did that work?
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    MR. HAASE:
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         It looks like you should be unmuted now,
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    Representative Bourriaque.
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    REPRESENTATIVE BOURRIAOUE:
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         Okav. Start the clock. It won't take more than
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    three minutes.
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    MR. HAASE:
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         Got it.
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    REPRESENTATIVE BOURRIAQUE:
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         I wanted to -- actually, don't start the clock.
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    It will take more than three minutes.
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Michelle S. Abadie, CCR Certified Court Reporter

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First of all, just I want to thank the CPRA for all your efforts. You referenced the hurricanes, and to see the assistance that was provided in this region post-Laura and Delta was significant. When you ask the locals what their thoughts were about the reduction in (unintelligible) standing water compared to previous rain events, I believe the -- the CPRA was -- played an integral role in assisting the -- the region in removing some of that excess water. So, first of all, thank you.

I -- I think that something that was impressive was the 71 percent number of the Annual Plan funds that are -- that are projected for construction. Did I see that slide correctly? That's -- that's significant, I think, from my first Annual Plan meetings in the early 2010s and the end of -- around '08, '09, that's a big change, and that's -- that's fairly impressive to see how far the coastal program has come in Louisiana. So I -- I certainly want to say that -- that that is encouraging. Although I know people want to see things more quicker -- you know, more quickly; however, it seems like progress is being made.

I do have one -- a couple questions relative to the budget. I know that there's an opportunity for

State surplus dollars to go to coastal efforts. 1 -- has there been a push in the past or is it a line 2 item in the Annual Plan where the State could 3 potentially set aside an allocation of funds for an 5 emergency, let's say, a federal -- a federallydeclared disaster, where something unbeknownst to the 6 locals, occurs and you have drainage issues or you 7 have pumping station issues, so forth and so on? I 8 know in other State programs, like Local Government 9 Assistance Program or the Community Water Enrichment 10 Fund Program, they have emergency set-asides in both 11 of those pots of money, and I don't know if the CPRA 12 saw any need to -- to have, you know, any amount of 13 funding set aside, even it was -- you know, \$500,000. 14 I mean, I don't know what degree of funding is, but 15 just to have that available for a federally-declared 16 disaster for some of those immediate needs, before 17 FEMA comes in and provides that assistance when the 18 locals are already cash strapped. So that's something 19 that I'd like to just -- just visit with you all on 20 further, preferably between now and session starting 21 maybe. 22 And then -- and related to that, but -- but 23 somewhat supplemental, once these disaster recovery 24

Michelle S. Abadie, CCR
Certified Court Reporter

dollars start to be realized how -- how difficult is

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the process to amend the Annual Plan to account for 1 some of these federal funds? So that's something else 2 that's I'd like to -- you know, I -- I know Congress 3 hasn't appropriated those disaster recovery dollars 5 just yet. I think you're going to see a push in -- in the southwest to use some of their funds on coastal 6 projects. I think that should make us all, you know, 7 fairly proud of that occurrence. But just -- just for 8 -- for -- for myself and the local parishes to have an 9 understanding about how those potential dollars could 10 be accommodated in the visions of the Annual Plan 11 should they -- should they present themselves in this 12 fiscal year. 13 So, again, I just want to say thank you for --14 for holding the virtual meeting. The information was 15 great, but, again, going back to assisting this area 16 during the 2020 hurricane season, it meant a lot to 17 our people, and so I appreciate you taking the time. 18 I appreciate you allowing me to use up my three 19 minutes. I talked about ten, but -- but thank you, 20 and I look forward to working on a couple of those 21 issues with y'all, Bren. Thanks. 22 MR. HAAS: 23 Well, thank you, Representative Bourriaque. 24

Michelle S. Abadie, CCR
Certified Court Reporter

appreciate the -- the kind words.

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And -- and to answer, I guess, your first question, I'll say, yes. So we do have the ability to -- or we do have some emergency funds, and we do have the ability to expend those. In fact, we -- we did expend some of those on -- in some of the response efforts after Hurricane Laura and Delta at the Mermentau Cut and also some of the pumping that occurred, you know, in the parish, Cameron Parish, following those two storms.

And, as relates to disaster recovery funds, I -- I think there is some things we could take advantage of there, and, certainly, happy to further that discussion with you, you know, between now and the time when -- when session -- session comes.

So we appreciate those comments, and, certainly, encourage anybody else -- I'm not seeing any other comments, at least in the chat -- in the chat box here. There's nothing -- nothing being emailed either. So we're going to stand by again for another few minutes. I'm going to go on mute while we do that, but we want to hear from you, so if you have any comments related to anything you've heard from me today or anything in the Draft Annual Plan that you've seen online, please, feel free to provide those to us while we're here.

(BRIEF RECESS.)

MR. HAAS:

All right, everybody. Well, we are not seeing any additional comments in the chat box. I do not believe we received any -- any additional comments through email.

I do want to bring one issue to -- to everyone's attention. The information to access this meeting was posted on our -- our calendar tab on our website.

Apparently, at 6 o'clock sharp, that information was transferred to the calendar archive. That's also available on our site, but if people were going to the calendar to look for the meeting and you were a second late, if you were a second past 6 o'clock sharp, it was not there. It was at the archive location.

So I would encourage you all, if you -- if there were people that had those issues -- and we had gotten a couple of emails and we let them know, please, just tune in tomorrow and/or wednesday, and we will include the same information that we've included tonight, in addition to some, you know, additional information for tomorrow, of course, on the southwest -- excuse me -- southcentral portion of the coast, and on wednesday evening the southeastern portion of the coast. So, because these are virtual, it's much easier for folks

to attend, hopefully, on multiple evenings should that be -- be needed or wanted.

We are going to try to fix that problem so that that doesn't happen tomorrow or Wednesday evening. We apologize for that, didn't realize that that would occur at 6 o'clock sharp, and certainly understand that people had difficulty signing on today. So we'll -- we'll likely publicize that via an email blast tomorrow, probably social media, and so forth so that folks are aware that they're encouraged to participate in the other two meetings, if, for some reason, they had difficulty accessing us tonight.

So checking one last time, I don't see anything else via chat and nothing else via email. So, folks, we appreciate your attention this evening. We appreciate the comments -- oh, getting one from Mr. Michael Tritico.

MR. TRITICO:

I just got connected. I guess I missed (unintelligible).

MR. HAAS:

Mr. Tritico, we were just discussing the difficulties that you had and -- and likely others had getting signed on. We very much apologize for that snafu. It was an issue with our website and the

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calendar feature of our website moving the appointment to the calendar archives, you know, port -- section of the website. So I would certainly encourage you to participate tomorrow -- at the meeting tomorrow if you are available or Thursday if it's available to you -if you are available to participate then -- excuse me -- Tuesday and Wednesday evening are the next two Annual Plan meetings. So I will be going over the information that I discussed in this meeting specific to the southwestern portion of the state tomorrow night and then also Wednesday night, as well. again, apologies for the difficulty with you signing in this evening. We will have that fixed for tomorrow, and -- and for Wednesday. And, again, I'll be reviewing the information that I reviewed today specific to the southwestern portion of the coast both Tuesday and Wednesday night, as well.

So okay. I am seeing no more comments again in the chat box, and the email, it looks like it's clear, as well. So we will -- we will sign off this evening.

Again, I want to appreciate -- thank you. We appreciate everybody's participation this evening.

Again, sorry for the calendar archive issue. We'll get that fix before tomorrow and for Wednesday. And if you know of people who had issues signing on this

evening, please, encourage them to sign on either Tuesday or Wednesday evening, and if we need to, we can -- we can hold another meeting specific to southwest, if -- if the desire is there. So thanks, everybody. We're going to call it a night. I'll check in one last time. Again, seeing no comments in the chat box, we're going to shut it down for this evening, and I want to say thanks to everybody and look forward to -- to talking with you more as we move through the Draft Annual Plan 2022 process. Thanks, everybody. THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS ADJOURNED.

CERTIFICATE

I, MICHELLE S. ABADIE, Certified Court Reporter in and for the State of Louisiana, do hereby certify that on February 22, 2021, conducted by Zoom videoconference at the offices of CPRA, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, that the matter of the 2022 Coastal Master Plan public hearing was reported by me in the stenomask reporting method, was prepared and transcribed by me or under my personal direction and supervision; that the foregoing pages, numbered 1 through 29, inclusive, is a true and correct transcript to the best of my ability and understanding; that I am not related any parties herein, nor am I otherwise interested in the outcome of this proceeding.

MICHELLE S. ABADIE, CCR #24032 CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER