

## **House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment**

Minutes of Meeting  
2016-2017 Interim  
October 19, 2016

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Representative Stuart J. Bishop, chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Stuart J. Bishop, chairman  
Representative Robert E. Billiot  
Representative Terry R. Brown  
Representative Patrick Connick  
Representative Jean-Paul P. Coussan  
Representative Phillip R. DeVillier  
Representative Franklin J. Foil  
Representative Jerry Gisclair  
Representative John E. Guinn  
Representative Christopher J. Leopold, vice chairman  
Representative Rodney Lyons  
Representative Jack G. McFarland  
Representative Blake Miguez  
Representative Jack Montoucet  
Representative James H. "Jim" Morris  
Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative James K. Armes, III  
Representative Charles R. Chaney  
Representative Malinda B. White

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Su King, legislative analyst  
Tyler S. McCloud, attorney  
Karen Stephens, secretary

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Representative Raymond E. Garofalo  
Senator Norby Chabert  
Senator Sharon Hewitt  
Danny Leming, sergeant at arms

**III. BUSINESS**

**Status report on the lawsuits filed by coastal parishes against oil and gas companies and a discussion of the state's role in the lawsuits.**

Representative Bishop provided a packet of information, including a letter to the governor and the governor's response, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

**Department of Natural Resources**

Secretary Tom Harris, Department of Natural Resources, no address provided, (225) 342-2710, shared information on the department's coastal management program and involvement in the coastal lawsuits.

Mr. Blake Canfield, executive counsel, Department of Natural Resources, 617 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-3024, narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Coastal Management Program and DNR Involvement in Coastal Lawsuits", Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. Donald Price, Department of Natural Resources, 617 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-4274, explained the current status and jurisdictions of all of the coastal lawsuits.

**Office of the Governor**

Mr. Matthew Block, executive counsel, office of the Governor, no address provided, reminded members that intervention in the lawsuits by the governor's office came subsequent to the attorney general's initial involvement. He said the governor remains open to continued discussions with all of the parties on how to reach a resolution.

Ms. Megan Terrell, legal advisor for coastal activities, Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, 18040 Jefferson Ridge Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70817, (225) 342-6502, spoke for information only on permits and restoration.

Mr. T. Taylor Townsend, P.O. Box 784, Natchitoches, LA 71458, spoke for information only on his history of public service and qualifications as an attorney, and listed the law firms whose work he would oversee.

**Office of the Attorney General**

Mr. Wilbur L. Stiles, Department of Justice, office of attorney general, no address provided, (225) 572-1862, answered questions about the attorney general's involvement in the Jefferson Parish lawsuit in particular.

**Representatives of parishes that have filed suits:**

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

**Iberia Parish**

Mr. Craig Romero, Port of Iberia, no address provided, (337) 380-2893, spoke for information only, and listed several parish governmental entities that voted to oppose the lawsuits.

**Lafourche Parish**

Mr. Chett Chiasson, Greater Lafourche Port Commission / Port Fourchon, 16829 E. Main Street, Galliano, LA 70345, (985) 632-6701, provided a copy of a letter addressed to the Lafourche Parish Council Members and President, Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records.

**Vermilion Parish**

Mr. Mark Poche', Vermilion Parish Police Jury, no address provided, Abbeville, LA, (337) 278-6644, explained why Vermilion Parish is against the lawsuits.

Mr. Richard Broussard, attorney, Vermilion Parish, P.O. Box 3524, Lafayette, LA 70506, (337) 233-2323, further explained why Vermilion Parish is against the lawsuits.

**Cameron, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and Vermilion Parishes**

Mr. John Carmouche, 17405 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 907-8792, explained why the parishes he represents are in favor of the lawsuits.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Isaac "Ike" Jackson, Jr., 23526 Federal Street, Plaquemine, LA 70764, (225) 644-2233, spoke for information only about repealing R.S. 30:51, relative to prescription of time. He provided a copy of a letter addressed to the editors at The Advocate, Exhibit D, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. John Barry, 1022 St. Peter Street, New Orleans, LA 70116, (504) 931-8125, spoke for information only. He was a member of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - East, the levee board that filed the initial lawsuit against Exxon Mobil, BP, Shell, Chevron and 94 other oil, gas, and pipeline companies for their role in destroying Louisiana's coast.

Mr. Jonathan Henderson, founding president, Vanishing Earth, 938 Pleasant Street, New Orleans, LA 70115, (504) 453-1375, provided a handout entitled "Oil and Gas Industry Damages in Louisiana Wetlands", Exhibit E, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. Chris John, Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association (LMOGA), 730 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, explained LMOGA's opposition to the lawsuits.

Mr. Gifford Briggs, Louisiana Oil and Gas Association (LOGA), P.O. Box 4069, Baton Rouge, LA, explained LOGA's opposition to the lawsuits.

Mr. John and Mr. Briggs provided a copy of a letter addressed to Mr. Block and Mr. Townsend, RE: Coastal Litigation - Cameron, Plaquemines, and Jefferson Parishes, Exhibit F, which is included in the committee records.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records. Three handouts were submitted by individuals who did not speak, Exhibit G, which are included in the committee records.

**IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Stuart J. Bishop  
House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Date approved: