

House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Minutes of Meeting
2021 Regular Session
May 5, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Jean-Paul P. Coussan, chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jean-Paul P. Coussan, chairman
Representative Ryan Bourriaque, vice chairman
Representative Rhonda Gaye Butler
Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Mack Marcel Cormier
Representative Phillip R. DeVillier
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Mandie Landry
Representative Buddy Mincey, Jr.
Representative Joseph A. Orgeron
Representative Neil Riser
Representative Troy D. Romero
Representative Rodney Wayne Schamerhorn
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Brett F. Geymann

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tyler Bosworth, legislative analyst
Robin Stalder, attorney
Trinicia Bryant, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Angela McKnight, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**House Bill No. 655 by Representative Brown**

Representative Brown presented House Bill No. 655, which provides for the removal of criminal penalties, reclassifies certain wildlife violations, and provides for enforcement and recovery of civil fines by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Mr. Jack Montoucet, secretary, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, no address provided, no phone number provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 655.

Representative Cormier offered a motion to report House Bill No. 655 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 655 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Carrier, Cormier, DeVillier, Kerner, Mincey, Orgeron, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 46 by Representative Mincey

Representative Mincey presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 46, which urges and requests the governor's executive assistant for coastal activities to coordinate a study among state agencies and make recommendations to the governor and the legislature relative to management of the Amite River Basin.

Mr. Chip Kline, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), no address provided, (225) 342-4367, spoke for information only on House Concurrent Resolution No. 46.

Representative Mincey offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 46 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 46 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Carrier, Cormier, DeVillier, Kerner, Mincey, Orgeron, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 48 by Representative Zeringue

Representative Zeringue presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 48, which urges and requests continued support for the efforts in the Mississippi River Basin to achieve the goals of the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan.

Representative DeVillier offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 48 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 48 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Carrier, Cormier, DeVillier, Kerner, Mincey, Orgeron, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 4 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 55 by Representative Zeringue

Representative Zeringue presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 55, which creates the Outdoor Conservation Study Group to study conservation funding mechanisms and programs.

Ms. Karen Gautreaux, The Nature Conservancy, P.O. Box 4125, no address provided, (225) 338-1040, spoke in support of House Concurrent Resolution No. 55.

Representative Coussan offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 55 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 55 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Carrier, Cormier, DeVillier, Kerner, Mincey, Orgeron, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 2 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee area as follows: 3 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 26 by Representative Coussan

Representative Coussan presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 26, which urges and requests the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to conduct a study to determine the final destination of oyster shells removed from Louisiana waters.

Ms. Kimberly Reyher, Coalition To Restore Coastal Louisiana, 3801 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70115, no phone number provided, spoke in support of House Concurrent Resolution No. 26.

Mr. Patrick Banks, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808, (225) 765-2370, spoke for information only on House Concurrent Resolution No. 26.

Representative Wheat offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 26 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 26 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Carrier, Cormier, DeVillier, Kerner, Mincey, Orgeron, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 7 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee area as follows: 5 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 226 by Representative Turner

Representative Turner presented House Bill No. 226, which provides relative to the process by which the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission can change the daily take, possession, and size limits of certain fish in Lake D'Arbonne in Union Parish.

Representative Bourriaque offered a motion to report House Bill No. 226 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 226 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Butler, Carrier, Cormier, DeVillier, Kerner, Mincey, Orgeron, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 682 by Representative Coussan

Representative Coussan presented House Bill No. 682, which provides relative to the powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Teche-Vermilion Freshwater District.

Mr. Donald Segreera, Teche-Vermillion Fresh Water District, 315 S. College Road, Suite 110, Lafayette, Louisiana, no zipcode provided, (337) 233-6902, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 682.

Mr. Ralph Libersat, Teche-Vermillion Fresh Water District, no address provided, no phone number provided, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 682.

Representative Coussan offered a motion to report House Bill No. 682 favorably, to which Representative Bourriaque objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 682 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 1 nays. Representatives Coussan, Carrier, Cormier, DeVillier, Kerner, Mincey, Orgeron, Riser, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea. Representative Bourriaque voted nay.

House Bill No. 691 by Representative Bacala

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 691, which provides relative to fee increases for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Mr. Jack Montoucet, secretary, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, no address provided, no phone number provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 691. He also provided the committee with an information packet outlining a path to stability and conservation fund cost saving efforts, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. Cole Garrett, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808, no phone number provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 691.

Mr. Bryan McClinton, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808, (225) 765-5071, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 691.

Mr. Jody Meche, Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association West (LCPA-West) P.O. Box 694, Henderson, Louisiana 70517, (337) 257-3331, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 691.

Mr. George Barisich, United Commercial Fisherman's Association, 2417 Yscloskey Highway, St. Bernard, Louisiana 70092, (504) 439-2013, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 691.

Mr. Alan Gibson, Louisiana Shrimp Task Force, 4815 Grand Caillou Road, Dulac, Louisiana 70353, (985) 563-4516, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 691.

Mr. Acy Cooper, Louisiana Shrimp Association, 42941 Highway 23, Venice, Louisiana 70091, (504) 912-0150, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 691.

Representative Coussan offered amendments to:

1. Change the crab gear crab trap fee and crawfish gear crawfish trap fee from \$15 plus an additional \$.50 per trap to a flat rate of \$50.00.

2. Provide that \$10.00 per resident commercial shrimp gear license sold and \$40.00 per nonresident commercial shrimp gear license sold annually go into the Shrimp Development and Management Account.
3. Change the amount of revenues collected from the issuance of wholesale out-of-state crab shipping licenses to be deposited into the Crab Development, Management, and Derelict Crab Trap Removal Account from 10% of revenues collected to all revenues collected.
4. Change the amount of revenues collected from the issuance of retail out-of-state crab shipping licenses to be deposited into the Crab Development, Management, and Derelict Crab Trap Removal Account from 10% of revenues collected to all revenues collected.
5. Change the annual fee for a nonresident charter fishing guide license from \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00.
6. Remove a provision that would have created the "Crawfish Development and Management Account" to collect certain fees for the sale of commercial gear licenses.
7. Remove a provision that would have provided a credit, of revenues collected from the sale of crawfish gear fees, to the Crawfish Development and Management Account.
8. Make technical changes.

Representative Coussan offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Carrier, DeVillier, Kerner, Landry, Orgeron, Riser, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Representative Kerner offered amendments to:

1. Decrease the cost of a commercial fishing license for residents from \$155.00 to \$110.00.
2. Decrease the cost of the Gulf Seafood Traversing and Offloading License for residents (Federal Exclusive Economic Zone "EEZ") from \$200.00 to \$175.00.
3. Decrease the cost of the commercial vessel license for residents from \$100.00 to \$70.00.

Representative Kerner offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Carrier, DeVillier, Kerner, Landry, Orgeron, Riser, Romero, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Representative Coussan offered a motion to report House Bill No. 691 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 691 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Butler, Carrier, DeVillier, Kerner, Landry, Mincey, Orgeron, Riser, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 9 in support, 33 in opposition, and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 3 in support and 21 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Wheat offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Coussan, Bourriaque, Butler, Carrier, DeVillier, Kerner, Landry, Mincey, Orgeron, Riser, Schamerhorn, and Wheat voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jean-Paul P. Coussan
House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Date adopted: