

Joint Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works

Minutes of Meeting
2024-2025 Interim
August 12, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Bourriaque, chairman of the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

HOUSE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Ryan Bourriaque, chair
Representative Chad Michael Boyer
Representative Jacob Braud
Representative Kellee Hennessy Dickerson
Representative Bryan Fontenot, vice chair
Representative Steven Jackson
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Patricia "Pat" Moore
Representative Tammy T. Phelps
Representative Rodney Wayne Schamerhorn
Representative Joy Walters
Representative Jeffrey Fons "Jeff" Wiley

HOUSE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Tehmi Jahi Chassion

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Patrick Connick, chair
Senator Mark Abraham
Senator Gary Carter, vice chair
Senator Patrick McMath
Senator Edward "Ed" Price
Senator William "Bill" Wheat

SENATE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Heather Cloud

HOUSE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Allison Williams, House attorney
Jennifer Winkler, House legislative analyst

Darcas Deverteuil, House committee administrative assistant

SENATE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Archana Cadge, Senate attorney
Christine Peck, Senate attorney
Serena Mohammad, Senate secretary

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Rebecca Marshall, House sergeant at arms
Theresa Charles, Senate sergeant at arms
John Rogers, Senate sergeant at arms

III. BUSINESS

To receive an update from CPRA regarding the Mid-Barataria Diversion and related issues

Gordon Dove, chairman, CPRA, no witness card provided, spoke for information only to provide the committee with an update on the Mid-Barataria Diversion, and presented a PowerPoint presentation, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Senator Connick thanked Chairman Dove for his work on the Mid-Barataria Diversion and thanked Plaquemines Parish President Keith Hinkley and the council for their work as well.

Chairman Dove answered questions from the committee on the plans and time line of completion for the project.

To receive an update on the status of the Department of Transportation and Development's reorganization plan

Mel Wolfgang, Boston Consulting Group, 200 Pier Four Blvd., Boston, MA 02210, spoke for information only and presented a PowerPoint presentation, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Parth Doshi, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), 10 Hudson Yards, New York, NY 10001, spoke for information only and presented a part of the PowerPoint Presentation, Exhibit B. He explained that BCG was still in the very early stages of their assessment and that the information heard today is not their final findings and went on to explain the process that BCG takes in gathering the information needed for the recommendations for the assessment report that would be finalized and submitted to the legislature by September 30th 2024.

Sheila Ho, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), 55 Water St., Brooklyn, NY, spoke for information only and presented a part of the PowerPoint Presentation, Exhibit B. She explained the process in which BCG does to gather data not only through internal DOTD, but from the legislature as well.

Committee members asked questions about BCG's findings so far in the process.

(Below action on the Port Priority Program Applications occurs between two separate discussions)

To receive public testimony and vote to accept, reject, or modify Port Priority Applications received through June 1, 2024, for inclusion in the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development FY 2025-2026 Recommended Port Construction and Development Priority Program

Julia Fisher-Cormier, office of multimodal commerce, DOTD HQ, no address provided, spoke for information only and presented a PowerPoint presentation, Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records.

Mary "Molly" Bourgoyne, DOTD-OMC, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., Baton Rouge, LA, spoke for information only, and presented a part of Exhibit C on the Port Priority Applications that were received.

Further action was taken by the committee on the Port Priority Program Applications at a later point in the meeting. Please check for subsequent action to complete the record of discussion and motion on the Port Priority Program Applications.

To receive a report on the status of the Louisiana Ports and Waterways Investment Commission

Chair Bourriaque requested that Commissioner Fisher-Cormier proceeded to giving the committee an update on the Louisiana Ports and Waterways Investment Commission before the committee voted on Port Priority applications.

Ms. Fisher-Cormier informed the committee of the intent of the Commission, the members that were appointed, and a breakdown of what she assumes will be the process to create a deep water port plan to market to the world.

Ms. Fisher-Cormier and Ms. Bourgoyne answered questions from committee members about different components of the proposed Port Priority list.

Stephen Barnes, UL Lafayette, 400 E. St. Mary St., Lafayette, LA, spoke for information only and helped Ms. Bourgoyne and Ms. Fisher-Cormier answer a few questions from Senator Abraham regarding the criteria for how the ports are ranked to receive funding.

Senator McMath suggested looking into restructuring the Port Priority Program to focus on funding the seven major deep ports in order to be competitive with surrounding state ports and taking advantage of the Mississippi River.

Representative Wright commented about the new Louisiana Ports and Waterways Investment Commission and the importance of capitalizing on these big investments.

Joseph Toomy, Port of New Orleans, no address provided, spoke for information only and spoke to his involvement in starting the dialogue between major ports to start conducting studies to figure out what steps the ports and the state could do to move Louisiana forward in port investments.

Senator Carter suggested to Mr. Toomy that while the ports are conducting studies that they also look into ways that the state could potentially take the raw materials received and process them in a way to also ship and connect that to our highways and rail systems. He then went on to state that Louisiana as a state needs to step up and invest more into our ports.

To receive public testimony and vote to accept, reject, or modify Port Priority Applications received through June 1, 2024, for inclusion in the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development FY 2025-2026 Recommended Port Construction and Development Priority Program

This is a continuation of the action on the Port Priority Program Applications from earlier in the meeting.

Senator Carter offered a motion to approve the Port Priority Applications received through June 1, 2024, for inclusion in the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development FY 2025-2026 Recommended Port Construction and Development Priority Program. Without objection the motion passed by a vote of 19 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bourriaque, Boyer, Braud, Dickerson, Fontenot, Jackson, C. Travis Johnson, Moore, Phelps, Schamerhorn, Tarver, Walters and Wiley voted yea. Senators Connick, Abraham, Carter, McMath, Price, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

To receive an update from the Department of Transportation and Development regarding the status of transportation projects funded during the 2024 Regular Session

Joe Donahue, LA DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only and presented a part of Exhibit C, on the breakdown of the Louisiana Transportation Infrastructure Funding.

Barry Keeling, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only and answered a few questions from the committee on the statewide bridge maintenance crew.

Secretary Donahue and Mr. Keeling answered questions from committee members about acquisition efforts and funding of different district needs.

To receive an update from the Department of Transportation and Development regarding the Plaquemines Parish Bridge Tolling operations, Peter's Road by-pass, and related matters

Joe Donahue, LA DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only and presented a part of Exhibit C, to update the committee on the Plaquemines Parish Bridge and Peters Road by-pass.

Committee members asked Secretary Donahue and Barry Keeling a series of questions about the progress and details of these projects, the impact of the tolls on the locals of Plaquemines parish, and public-private partnership (P-3) contracts.

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

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Fontenot offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bourriaque, Boyer, Braud, Fontenot, Phelps, Schamerhorn, Walters and Wiley voted yeas. Senators Connick, Abraham, and Carter voted yeas.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Ryan Bourriaque
House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works