

House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Minutes of Meeting
2024 Regular Session
April 16, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Brett F. Geymann, chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Brett F. Geymann, chairman
Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Tehmi Jahi Chassion
Representative Kimberly Landry Coates
Representative Jason Brian Dewitt
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Jacob Jules Gabriel Landry
Representative Shane Mack
Representative Danny McCormick
Representative Joseph A. Orgeron, vice chairman
Representative Neil Riser
Representative Jerome Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robin Stalder, attorney
Benjamin Westra, attorney
Lacy Slaughter, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Cheryl Domino, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**House Resolution No. 2 by Representative Echols**

On behalf of Representative Echols, Representative Riser presented House Resolution No. 2, which urges and requests the United States Congress to enact reforms to federal permitting policies to accelerate deployment of new energy infrastructure.

Representative Carrier offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 2 favorably. Without objection, House Resolution No. 2 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Dewitt, Kerner, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals that did not speak are as follows: 4 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee record.

House Bill No. 693 by Representative Bayham

Representative Bayham presented House Bill No. 693, which establishes a seafood import license for seafood dealers.

Representative Kerner offered a motion to report House Bill No. 693 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 693 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Dewitt, Kerner, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, and Zeringue voted yea.

House Bill No. 795 by Representative Zeringue

Representative Zeringue presented House Bill No. 795, which provides for revenue reductions from free and discounted recreational hunting and fishing licenses.

Bryan McLinton, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 795.

Cole Garrett, LDWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 795.

Representative Kerner offered a motion to report House Bill No. 795 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 795 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Dewitt, Kerner, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals that did not speak are as follows: 3 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee record.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 18 by Representative Beaulieu

Representative Beaulieu presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 18, which urges and requests the administration of President Biden to end its pause on pending approvals of liquefied natural gas exports.

Representative Riser offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 18 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 18 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Coates, Dewitt, Kerner, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals that did not speak are as follows: 4 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee record.

House Bill No. 806 by Representative Geymann

Representative Geymann presented House Bill No. 806, which provides for membership on the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board.

Tyler Gray, Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR), no address provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 806.

Simone Maloz, Restore The MS River Delta, 3801 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70119, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 806.

Karen Gautreaux, The Nature Conservancy, P.O. Box 4125, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 806.

Matt Rota, Healthy Gulf, P.O. Box 2245, New Orleans, LA 70176, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 806.

Kristi Trail, Pontchartrain Conservancy, P.O. Box 6965, Metairie, LA 70009, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 806.

Dustin Davidson, DENR, 617 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA no zip code provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 806.

Representative Zeringue offered amendments originated in committee to remove the lieutenant governor from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Board and keep the commissioner of agriculture on the board. Representative Zeringue offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments, to which Representative McCormick objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and the motion failed to pass by a vote of 4 yeas and 7 nays. Representatives Coates, Kerner,

Orgeron, and Zeringue voted yea. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Dewitt, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Riser voted nay.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF), no address provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 806.

Joey Breaux, LDAF, no address provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 806.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to report House Bill No. 806 favorably, to which Representative Zeringue objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 806 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 1 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Coates, Dewitt, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, and Riser voted yea. Representative Zeringue voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals that did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, 4 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee record.

House Bill No. 810 by Representative Geymann

Representative Geymann presented House Bill No. 810, which provides for the organization, duties, and responsibilities of the Dept. of Energy and Natural Resources.

Tyler Gray, no witness card provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 810.

Representative Geymann offered amendments to change the effective date of the Act from upon governor's signature to July 1, 2024. Representative Geymann offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Coates, Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

Representative Orgeron offered a motion to report House Bill No. 810 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 810 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Coates, Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals that did not speak are as follows: 5 in support and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee record.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 810 pursuant to House Rule 14.33.

Representative Jacob Landry offered a motion to implement the three minute rule. Without objection, the three minute rule was implemented by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Coates, Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

House Bill No. 474 by Representative Coates

Representative Coates presented House Bill No. 474, which prohibits the use of natural wetlands as tertiary treatment in waste water assimilation projects, and presented a Power Point presentation.

Kristi Trail, Pontchartrain Conservancy, P.O. Box 6965, Metairie, LA 70009, spoke in support of House Bill No. 474.

Matt Rota, Healthy Gulf, P.O. Box 2245, New Orleans, LA 70176, spoke in support of House Bill No. 474.

Rebecca Triche, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, 8480 Bluebonnet Boulevard, #F, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, spoke in support of House Bill No. 474.

Matthew Allen, Northshore Riverwatch, 13058 Major Lane, Folsom, LA 70437, spoke in support of House Bill No. 474.

R. Eugene Turner, citizen, 925 Fulwar Skipwith Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke in support of House Bill No. 474.

Edward Bodker, self, 39484 S. Hoover Road, no city, state, or zip code provided, spoke in support of House Bill No. 474.

Kimberly Corts, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), 602 North 5th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 474.

Jay Love, LDEQ, 602 N. 5th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 474.

Jacob B. Groby III, City of Mandeville Utilities, 1100 Mandeville High Drive, Mandeville, LA 70471, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 474.

John Day, Comite Resources, 2005 Olive Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 474.

Rachael Hunter, Comite Resources, 429 S. Donmoor Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA, no zip code provided, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 474.

Lacy Landrum, City of Hammond, 43 Pine Square, Hammond, LA 70401, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 474.

Vice-Chairman Orgeron in the chair.

Paulette Bailey-Wilson, Louisiana Municipal Association, no address provided, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 474.

Guy Cormier, Police Jury Association of Louisiana, 707 N. 7th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 474.

Blake Canfield, DENR, 617 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 474.

Chairman Geymann in the chair.

Kyle Balkum, DENR, 617 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 474.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 474. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 474 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Coates, Dewitt, Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals that did not speak are as follows: 1 in support and 2 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee record.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 474 pursuant to House Rule 14.33.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Consideration and approval of the sale of 528 acres of unimproved timberland in Columbia County, Arkansas by Louisiana Tech University

Representative Riser addressed the committee regarding consideration and approval of the sale of 528 acres of unimproved timberland in Columbia County, Arkansas by Louisiana Tech University. An appraisal report was received by the committee, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Riser offered a motion to approve the sale. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Dewitt, Kerner, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Consideration and approval of the sale of a 13.01 acre tract of land located on the west side of Rodgers Road, north of Highway 80, in Lincoln Parish, Louisiana by Louisiana Tech University

Representative Riser addressed the committee regarding consideration and approval of the sale of a 13.01 acre tract of land located on the west side of Rodgers Road, north of Highway 80, in Lincoln Parish, Louisiana by Louisiana Tech University. An appraisal report was received by the committee, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Riser offered a motion to approve the sale. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Dewitt, Kerner, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

PRESENTATIONS:

Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR)

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)

Aurelia S. Giacometto, DEQ, 602 N. 5th Avenue, Baton Rouge, no state or zip code provided, spoke for information only, presented a PowerPoint presentation, and gave an overview of the various aspects of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Jacob Landry offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Carrier, Coates, Dewitt, Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Brett F. Geymann

House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Date adopted: