

House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Minutes of Meeting
2025 Regular Session
April 23, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Joe Orgeron, vice chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Brett F. Geymann, chair
Representative Jacob Braud
Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Kimberly Landry Coates
Representative Jessica Domangue
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe
Representative Jacob Jules Landry
Representative Shane Mack
Representative Danny McCormick
Representative Joseph A. Orgeron, vice chair
Representative Neil Riser
Representative Lauren Ventrella
Representative Jerome Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Jason Brian DeWitt

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robin Stalder, attorney
Jennifer Winkler, legislative analyst
Brandy Ladmirault, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Myrtis Jarrel, sergeant at arms
Cesilee Oliver, clerk

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**House Bill No. 196 by Representative Stagni**

Representative Stagni presented House Bill No. 196, which authorizes the lease of certain state property in Jefferson Parish and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Arita M.L. Bohannon, Jefferson Parish Council District 4, 1221 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Jefferson, LA 70123, spoke in support of House Bill No. 196.

Michael Glaser, City of Kenner, 1610 Rev. Richard Wilson Drive, Kenner, LA 70062, spoke in support of House Bill No. 196.

Representative Kerner offered a motion to report House Bill No. 196 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 196 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Bryant, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

House Bill No. 205 by Representative McCormick

Representative McCormick presented House Bill No. 205, which provides for the operation of saltwater disposal wells in the parishes of Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, DeSoto, Red River, and Webster.

Mimi Blanchard, Legislative Fiscal Office, no card provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 205.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to report House Bill No. 205 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 205 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Bryant, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

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

House Bill No. 154 by Representative McMahan

Representative McMahan presented House Bill No. 154, which authorizes the transfer of certain state property in the parishes of Webster and Bienville and provided a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Cheston Hill, DOA/OSL, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 154.

Representative Orgeron offered a motion to report House Bill No. 154 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 154 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

House Bill No. 615 by Representative Geymann

Representative Geymann presented House Bill No. 615, which provides for the regulation of solar facilities and presented a PowerPoint.

Representative Geymann offered a technical amendment. Representative Geymann offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

Representative Orgeron offered a motion to invoke the Three-Minute Rule. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, and Orgeron voted yea.

Representative Geymann offered amendments to:

- (1) Change the vegetative barrier requirement by removing the requirement that evergreen trees be included, to add that the barrier be opaque, and adds an option to retain existing vegetation on site if it otherwise meets the vegetative barrier requirements.
- (2) Change the buffer applicable to natural and navigable waterways from a 500 foot setback with a 200 foot vegetative barrier to a 100 foot vegetative barrier only.
- (3) Change the requirement that all existing facilities come into compliance with the new law by August 1, 2027, to a requirement that all facilities constructed after September 1, 2024, come into compliance with the new law by August 1, 2027, and that

facilities constructed prior to September 1, 2024, will be required to come into compliance with the new laws only to the extent practicable.

- (4) Make technical changes.

Representative Orgeron offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, LaCombe, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, and Riser voted yea.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana State Capitol, 3rd Floor, no city or state provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 615.

Cole Garrett, LDWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 615.

Bryan McClinton, LDWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 615.

Sterling Burnett, Heartland Institute, 3939 North Wilke Road, Arlington Heights, no city or state provided, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Erin Sandefur, Livingston Parish, 24411 Oma Harris Lane, Denham Springs, LA 70726, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Rebecca Triche, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, 8480 Bluebonnet Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Matt Coday, P.O. Box 16353, Odessa, TX 79768, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Tommy Buckner, 2776 Topsy Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Tim Croxdale, 2833 Cardinal Lane, Lake Charles, LA 70611, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Greg Brady, 5095 Hickory Branch Road, Lake Charles, LA, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Tommy Cryar, 3883 Deer Run Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Nick Smith, no address provided, spoke in support of House Bill No. 615.

Jeff Clark, Advanced Power Alliance, 304 Laurel Street, Baton Rouge, LA, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 615.

Jeffrey Cantin, Solar Alternatives Inc., Gulf States Renewable Energy Industries Association, 400 Poydras Street, Suite 400, no city or state provided, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 615.

Stefan Deville, land owner, 3726 Faubourg Road, Washington, LA 70589, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 615.

Samuel Pearce, Avoyelles Parish Police Jury, P.O. Box 340, Evergreen, LA 71333, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 615.

Don Caffery, Natural Resources Management Association, 822 Harding Street, Suite 307, Lafayette, LA 70503, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 615.

Norby Chabert, Claitor Chabert/Southern Renewable Energy Association, 6513 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 615.

Dan Claitor, Claitor Chabert/Southern Renewable Energy Association, 6513 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 615.

Terrence Chambers, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 110 Chastant Boulevard, Lafayette, LA 70508, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 615.

Jeff Arnold, America First Energy Project Louisiana, 3116 Bore Street, Metairie, LA 70001, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 615.

Guy Cormier, Police Jury Association of Louisiana, 707 North 7th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 615.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to report House Bill No. 615 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 615 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, LaCombe, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support, 18 in opposition, and 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 615.

Chair Geymann in the chair.

House Bill No. 637 by Representative Coates

Representative Coates presented House Bill No. 637, which establishes habitat conversion fees for large-scale solar development.

Cole Garrett, LDWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 637.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to report House Bill No. 637 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 637 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Bryant, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, LaCombe, Mack, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support, 11 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 638 by Representative Coates

Representative Coates presented House Bill No. 638, which establishes agricultural conversion fees for large-scale solar development.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana State Capitol, 3rd Floor, no city and state provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 638.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to report House Bill No. 638 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 638 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Bryant, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, Mack, McCormick, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support, 11 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 459 by Representative Coates

Representative Coates presented House Bill No. 459, which provides for renewable energy regulation and permitting.

Representative Coates offered amendments to:

- (1) Provide an exclusion for applicability of proposed law to residential property use.

- (2) Define "onshore" as land-based wind turbines and those located on inland water bodies.
- (3) Make technical changes.

Representative Coates 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, Braud, Bryant, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, Mack, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Representative Coates offered a motion to report House Bill No. 459 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 459 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Bryant, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, Mack, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 7 in support, and 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 Zeringue offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Bryant, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, Mack, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Brett F. Geymann
House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Date adopted: