



Jeff Landry
Governor

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. BOX 94004
BATON ROUGE
70804-9004

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Tyler Gray
Secretary
Department of Energy and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 94396
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

**RE: Executive Order JML 24-13 – DRIVE Initiative
Creation of the Natural Resources Steering Commission**

Dear Secretary Gray:

In accordance with Executive Order JML 24-13 ("EO"), I will be establishing the Natural Resources Steering Commission ("NRSC") in lieu of a committee to serve a *guiding role* for action following up on the coordination and study to-date of the Executive Branch agencies and their functions relating to natural resources per the authority granted to me by the Constitution of the State of Louisiana and in order to assist in the carrying out of your authority under, the EO, R.S. 36:351(C)(2) and 354(A)(12). This Commission will comprehensively review and coordinate all aspects of natural resources management throughout the state of Louisiana.

The NRSC will act in accordance with the goals of organizational alignment, efficiency and coordination, emergency response, scope, standardization of policies and guidelines, clarifying relationships, collaboration and data sharing, strategic planning, outcome-based programs, future reports and continuous improvement, infrastructure consideration, and demand-oriented energy planning. The NRSC will be led by Mr. Gordon Dove, chair of the board of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), the Secretary of Louisiana's Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR) and the Commissioner of Conservation, or their designees, knowing that consideration will be given to expanding the membership, ensuring oversight, driving towards efficient operations in natural resources regulation, enforcement, management, and support functions.

The NRSC shall work to accomplish their goals on a reasonable but expedited schedule to promote meaningful change in line with upcoming fiscal shortfalls. Furthermore, I direct the NRSC to work with the Legislature, including the committee chairs on natural resources and governmental organization to permanently establish the NRSC within the LDENR and provide it with the

necessary authority to work through details of further coordination and/or consolidation of the natural resources regulatory, enforcement, management, and support functions of the State in the future.

Further, I direct you in coordination with the NRSC to pursue the following changes, including where necessary, appropriate statutory changes:

Scope Defining Structural Changes:

- **Office of Enforcement:** Establish within LDENR the clear enforcement agency for all state and federally-delegated programs and to also include emergency response functions for natural resources matters (R.S. 36:351, et seq);
- **Oil Spill Coordinator:** Optimize continuity of Oil Spill Coordinator's office by placing it under LDENR's new emergency response functions. (R.S. 30:2455, et seq.);
- **Oilfield Site Restoration:** Transfer responsibility for this (R.S. function to the newly-established Office of Enforcement (R.S. 30:80, et seq);
- **Oyster Lease Damage Evaluation Board:** Transfer responsibility for this function to the newly-established Office of Enforcement (R.S. 56:700.10, et seq);
- **Fisherman's Gear Fund:** Transfer responsibility for this function to the newly-established Office of Enforcement (R.S. 36:354(E)(2) et seq and R.S. 30:101.1, et seq);
- **Office of Conservation:** Re-establish within DENR, and transfer all responsibility for permitting, compliance, and regulatory functions for natural resources-related programs in the Executive Branch and managing any conflicts by rule or policy (R.S. 30:4, et seq., and 36:359(B)(1);
- **Energy Office:** Re-establish the Energy Office within LDENR to develop demand-oriented planning for energy needs, policy, and to coordinate directly with Center for Energy Studies on data management and Louisiana Economic Development on energy or natural resources related initiatives as needed. (R.S. 36:351, et seq);
- **Natural Resources Finance Authority:** Establish a Natural Resources Finance Authority within the LDENR to work with the Louisiana Department of Treasury on natural-resources-related finance matters;
- **Sunsets:** Establish and align sunset dates for natural resources-related boards and commissions, including but not limited to, Advisory Commission for Louisiana's Energy Environment; Emerging Energy Codification Task Force; Governor's Advisory Task Force on Atchafalaya River Basin Restoration and Enhancement; Oilfield Site Restoration Commission; State Mineral and Energy Board; Oyster Lease Damage Evaluation Board; Sparta Groundwater Conservation District; and the Water Resources Commission;
- **Office of Land & Water Management:** Establish within LDENR the following divisions to oversee the below listed programs and functions (R.S. 36:351, et seq.);
 - **Division of Water:**
 - The regulation of the use, sale, or consumption of surface water and groundwater as to quantity (R.S. 38:3098, et seq., R.S. 38:3097.1, et seq., and R.S. 30:961, et seq.).
 - Water Resources Management (R.S. 38:3097.1, et seq).
 - Water Resources Commission (R.S. 38:3097.8).
 - Water Well Drillers and Registration (R.S. 38:3098, et seq).

- Authority over Groundwater Management, including but not limited to, Capital Area Ground Water Conservation District, Sparta Groundwater Conservation District, and any other regional groundwater agencies (R.S. 38:3701, et seq., and R.S. 38:3087.131, et seq.);
- Authority over watershed management and coordination currently located in the Office of Community Development;
- **Division of Storage, Land, Energy, and Minerals:**
 - Rights-of-Way and Surface Leases (R.S. 41:1173; 1211; 1221).
 - Waterbottom Permits and Leases (R.S. 41:1701-1714).
 - State Mineral and Energy Board (R.S. 30:121, et seq).

Balancing the CPRA Board:

On its face, the CPRA Board appears balanced. However, I am concerned the board is, in fact, unbalanced. I therefore direct you to pursue an amendment of R.S. 49:214.5.1 optimizing implementation of coastal projects by reducing overlap on the CPRA Board with my Cabinet and elected officials with duties tangentially related to the mission of the board, including but not limited to, the members set forth in R.S. 49:214.5.1(B)(3-9), subsequently balancing those appointments in subparagraph (B)(10).

Administrative Duties:

To optimize natural resources functions, I hereby request delegation of the authorities and duties of the Governor's Executive Assistant on Coastal Activities to the Secretary of the LDENR except for those found at R.S. 49:214.3.1(A)(1) and (B)(2)(c), allowing for the administration of responsibilities and functions specified in the statute, ensuring the coordination of integrated coastal protection efforts, management of budgetary matters, and representation of the state's position at various levels of government. This delegation aims to streamline and enhance the efficiency of coastal protection activities while aligning with the legislative intent expressed in R.S. 49:214.1.

Further, recognizing the need for LDENR to have appropriate capacity to procure and oversee the federal grant programs it has been awarded and is seeking, CPRA is directed to expeditiously work on implementing a plan to assist LDENR by providing procurement, contract, and grant oversight support.

These changes are implemented with the goal of enhancing natural resources management and streamlining environmental protection and conservation efforts in Louisiana.

For Louisiana,



Jeff Landry
Governor