



JEFF M. LANDRY
GOVERNOR

TYLER PATRICK GRAY
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

March 14, 2024

The Honorable Gordon Dove
Chair of the Board
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
150 Terrace Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

RE: Natural Resources Steering Commission – Schedule of Review
Department Review for Innovative and Visionary Enhancement (DRIVE)

Chairman:

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding the recent creation of the Natural Resources Steering Commission (NRSC) and the proposed reorganization of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR), as outlined in Governor Landry's letter dated March 11, 2024.

As per the directives outlined in Executive Order JML 24-13, the NRSC has been established to oversee the DRIVE initiative aligning any actions with the goals set forth by Governor Landry. It is imperative to note that the delegation of administrative authority to the Secretary of DENR, as specified in R.S. 49:214.3.1, does not diminish, erode, or change the authority vested in R.S. 49:214.3.1 or its mission. Instead, it presents an opportunity to enhance Louisiana's management of natural resources while ensuring the balance of citizen's needs and State's natural resources and coast.

Efforts are underway to engage stakeholders and solicit feedback on proposed legislative needs to support Governor Landry's objectives. The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) serves as a model for effective management and will guide our approach across other natural resources functions, ensuring comprehensive alignment on permitting, compliance, enforcement, management, and implementation to act strategically on behalf of the State.

Given the scale of impact this process has, it is important to collect information on the history and intent behind existing programs, potential impacts of proposed changes, and recommendations from the impacted stakeholders in Louisiana. Therefore, in coordination with Governor Landry and in order to facilitate a transparent and inclusive process, the portal to receive public comments will remain open. At this time, we will seek public comment on a schedule of review on the timing and topics referenced in Executive Order JML 24-13. Informally, planning to initiate regular stakeholder engagement under public scrutiny in recommending a fair, transparent, and intuitive regime balancing all interests related to Louisiana's natural resources.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on the proposed schedule and issues for review at this address:

<https://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/form/home/52>

Comments received prior to March 29, 2024 will be utilized in establishing our plans surrounding stakeholder engagement. Meetings with stakeholders will be arranged based on topic relevance and availability. To schedule an in-person, virtual, or conference call meeting, stakeholders should send an email to driveinitiative@la.gov. All requests will be answered in the order in which it was received.

A proposed schedule, designed to ensure meaningful progress while allowing for necessary deliberation, is being drafted with consideration of dates, milestones, and other timelines impacting the executive branch. Your insights and feedback on milestones to consider will be invaluable in refining our approach.

After reviewing all comments, the schedule of review will be published aligning with Governor Landry's Executive Order 24-13 and the letter dated March 11, 2024, *with additional considerations based on public feedback*.

In the upcoming 2024 Regular Session, statutory changes will be pursued, in consultation with the committee chairs of jurisdiction, to support an efficient and methodical optimization of DENR by organizing authorities under Title 36 and potentially changing authorities in Title 30 or elsewhere for the specific offices requested by the Governor. Following a comprehensive review and stakeholder engagement process set forth under a schedule of review, substantial revisions will be proposed after careful consideration, with the aim of finalizing all proposals by October 31, 2024, coinciding with the submission of agency budget recommendations to the Division of Administration for FY25-26 with consideration for the fiscal shortfall.

In conclusion, this process aims to realign the functions of the executive branch on natural resources, ensuring all government-federal, state, and local-align with integrated coastal protection, including infrastructure, hurricane protection and wetlands conservation and restoration, and mitigation projects related to wetlands in the coastal area simultaneously pursuing how this mission could permeate across man-made barriers to the citizens throughout the state on issues, including but not limited to, flood control, groundwater, and other matters related to Louisiana's natural resources.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the well-being of our state.

Sincerely,



Tyler Patrick Gray, Secretary
Department of Energy and Natural Resources

CC: Governor Jeffrey M. Landry, C/O Kyle Ruckert, Chief of Staff
The Honorable Benjamin Bienvenu, Commissioner of Conservation
Honorable Phillip Devilier, Speaker, Louisiana House of Representatives
Honorable Cameron Henry, President, Louisiana Senate