

1 WHEREAS, pursuant to R.S. 49:214.1, the legislature declared that it is the policy
2 of the state to achieve a proper balance between development and conservation and to
3 encourage the use of coastal resources; and

4 WHEREAS, Louisiana's oyster resource is one of the largest and most valuable
5 oyster resources in the nation, maintaining a dominant force in the Gulf-wide and national
6 marketplace, and the legislature concurs that there is a public and economic interest in
7 providing for the continued existence of the oyster industry of this state and preserving and
8 enhancing the oyster resource in this state; and

9 WHEREAS, Governor John Bel Edwards has made pursuing initiatives that will
10 ensure a sustainable oyster industry one of his second term coastal priorities; and

11 WHEREAS, the 2017 Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast identifies
12 projects designed to build and maintain land, reduce flood risk to our citizens and
13 communities, and provide habitats to support ecosystems that will assist in providing for the
14 continued existence of Louisiana's economically important seafood industry and preserving
15 and enhancing the seafood resources that support it, including oysters; and

16 WHEREAS, oyster production on the public oyster areas of Louisiana is at an
17 all-time low and responsible rehabilitation of this valuable economic and ecological resource
18 is needed; and

19 WHEREAS, it is important to identify options that could be viable in their attempts
20 to assist the oyster industry in responding to a changing coast and conditions; and

21 WHEREAS, physical space to work in the coastal zone is also at a premium with
22 multiple users oftentimes vying for the same water bottom, and this can sometimes create
23 direct special conflicts between CPRA projects and existing oyster leases; and

24 WHEREAS, the legislature seeks to support and protect, to the maximum extent
25 practicable, the oyster leaseholders in the enjoyment of their rights to cultivate leased water
26 bottoms and also identify areas where production is absent; and

27 WHEREAS, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and LDWF have
28 recently taken important steps to assist the oyster industry in future advancement by
29 implementing the oyster lease moratorium lifting process and by undesignating nearly forty
30 thousand water bottom acres of public oyster seed grounds to be allowed for future oyster

1 leasing; and

2 WHEREAS, LDWF and CPRA have a long history of working together to ensure
3 continued sustainability of the oyster industry and to identify, avoid, and mitigate conflicts
4 with integrated coastal protection projects; and

5 WHEREAS, LDWF and CPRA are currently working together to develop a
6 Louisiana Oyster Management and Rehabilitation Strategic Plan to guide the Louisiana
7 public oyster resource and oyster industry to a more productive future and to set forth a path
8 for recovery and maintenance of Louisiana's oyster resources, for promotion and
9 maintenance of a thriving oyster resource and industry in Louisiana, and for assistance with
10 industry adaptation and development, while reducing conflicts in the coastal zone; and

11 WHEREAS, LDWF and CPRA's work has already identified potential projects,
12 programs, and funding that can assist with implementing a Louisiana oyster management
13 and rehabilitation strategic plan and support sustainability of the oyster industry through
14 direct and indirect means; and

15 WHEREAS, it is the desire of the legislature that LDWF and CPRA continue to work
16 together for the benefit of the Louisiana oyster industry in order to promote and maintain the
17 sustainability of a thriving Louisiana oyster resource and industry while also fully
18 implementing the plan to eliminate the catastrophic rate of coastal land loss, as a
19 high-priority public policy of the state.

20 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
21 urge and request the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the Louisiana
22 Department of Wildlife and Fisheries continue to work together to:

23 (1) Develop a Louisiana Oyster Management and Rehabilitation Strategic Plan that
24 will guide the Louisiana public oyster resource and oyster industry to a more productive
25 future and provide a path for recovery and maintenance of Louisiana's oyster resources, for
26 promotion and maintenance of a thriving oyster resource and industry in Louisiana, and for
27 assistance with industry sustainability and development, while reducing conflicts in the
28 coastal zone.

29 (2) Develop initiatives to be utilized to rehabilitate, where practicable, the
30 productivity of the public oyster areas in Louisiana, assist the oyster industry in evolving to

1 a changing coast, and address competing uses for coastal water bottoms while also fully
2 implementing the coastal master plan to eliminate the catastrophic rate of coastal land loss,
3 as a high-priority public policy of the state.

4 (3) Identify funding sources to implement programs and projects to promote and
5 maintain a thriving oyster resource and industry in Louisiana and also maintain a balance
6 with other coastal uses and needs in order to allow for the most efficient utilization of coastal
7 areas.

8 (4) Prioritize, sequence, and select restoration projects to benefit the coastal and
9 oyster resources, including developing additional information on restoration approaches and
10 techniques, potential project concepts, and monitoring needs, including but not limited to the
11 following projects and programs: (a) cultch planting, (b) hatchery-raised oyster planting, (c)
12 private oyster lease rehabilitation (POLR) program, and (d) off-bottom oyster aquaculture.

13 (5) Study actual and potential impacts to oysters and the oyster industry in Louisiana
14 resulting from natural processes, coastal erosion, implementation of integrated coastal
15 protection projects, and other outside competing interests, in order to develop strategies to
16 address such impacts and identify options that could be viable in assisting the oyster industry
17 response to a changing coast.

18 (6) Act in the state's best interest to have oyster leases where oyster production
19 occurs, while also reducing leased acreage where oyster production is not possible so that
20 other uses of those unproductive water bottoms can occur, including integrated coastal
21 protection.

22 (7) Develop overall strategies to promote and maintain the sustainability of a thriving
23 Louisiana oyster resource and industry while also balancing the needs of the state of
24 Louisiana to reduce, if not eliminate, the catastrophic rate of coastal land loss, as a
25 high-priority public policy of the state.

26 (8) Coordinate all such efforts, planning, programs, and projects with oyster resource
27 and industry stakeholders, including the Oyster Task Force.

28 (9) Finalize a Louisiana Oyster Management and Rehabilitation Strategic Plan by
29 December 2020 and deliver copies of the final Strategic Plan to the President of the Senate,
30 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate Natural Resources Committee, the

