

State of Louisiana

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JBE 2020 – 22

ATCHAFALAYA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya River Basin is the largest remaining river swamp in North America, and its forests, marshes, and waters provide habitat for more than 300 species of wildlife, 100 different aquatic species, a rich diversity of native plants, and it supports cultural, economic, and natural treasures;

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya River Basin has been impacted by flood protection, navigation, and resource extraction;

WHEREAS, in 1998, the State of Louisiana recognized the cumulative negative impacts to the environmental health of the ecosystem and created the Atchafalaya Basin Program to develop, implement, and manage a comprehensive state master plan for the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System;

WHEREAS, Act 570 of the 2018 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature transferred the management of the Atchafalaya Basin Program from the Department of Natural Resources to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority;

WHEREAS, the 2017 Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast (Coastal Master Plan) contains various objectives including the restoration and use of natural processes, providing habitat, and supporting our working coast;

WHEREAS, in order to conserve and sustain the economic, cultural, and natural resources of the Basin and appropriately utilize its resources in the management and restoration of the Louisiana coastal ecosystem, it is necessary to better integrate the restoration and enhancement of the Atchafalaya River Basin into the Coastal Master Plan and the coastal program under the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority;

WHEREAS, efforts to develop the 2023 Coastal Master Plan are currently ongoing, and those efforts benefit with the engagement and participation of numerous coastal stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, integration of the Atchafalaya Basin Program to the overall Coastal Program is a statewide priority, and the engagement of stakeholders with knowledge of the Basin and its processes will be critical in making an integration effort successful.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JOHN BEL EDWARDS, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested in the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana do hereby order and direct as follows:

SECTION 1: The Governor's Advisory Task Force on Atchafalaya River Basin Restoration and Enhancement is established and created within the Office of the Governor.

SECTION 2: The duties of the Task Force shall include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Elevating critical issues facing the Atchafalaya River Basin today and the importance of its holistic management for navigation, flood control, and restoration;
- B. Identifying and building support for new and recurring sources of funding, including working closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reinvigorate the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System – Louisiana Project;
- C. Identifying shared goals and values for restoration and enhancement of the Basin, as illustrated by project types that would benefit both the Basin and the larger coastal program as managed by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority; and
- D. Serve to proactively build consensus and advise the Atchafalaya Basin Program on matters relating to implementation of the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System – Louisiana Project.

SECTION 3: By September 1, 2021, the Task Force shall submit an initial report including its recommendations and key priorities to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board.

SECTION 4: The Governor shall appoint the chair from membership, and the Task Force shall be administered by the Office of the Governor – Coastal Activities.

Members shall include:

- 1) The Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities or their designee;
- 2) The Executive Director of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority or their designee;
- 3) The Policy Director for the Office of the Governor or other designee of the Governor;
- 4) The Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries or their designee;
- 5) The Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources or their designee;
- 6) The Public Lands Administrator at the Division of Administration, Office of State Lands or their designee;
- 7) One representative from the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration and Conservation
- 8) One representative from each of the East and West Atchafalaya Basin to be chosen by Governor from 7 names, one submitted by each parish);
- 9) Two representatives of landowners in the Atchafalaya River Basin;
- 10) Two representatives of conservation organizations participating in policy or projects relating to the conservation of the Atchafalaya River Basin;
- 11) A representative of the energy transportation sector;
- 12) A representative of the inland navigation sector;
- 13) A representative from the Port of Morgan City;
- 14) A representative from the commercial fishing industry in the East Atchafalaya Basin;
- 15) A representative from the commercial fishing industry in the West Atchafalaya Basin;
- 16) A representative from the recreational fishing industry in the Atchafalaya River Basin; and
- 17) A representative from an academic institution doing research in the Atchafalaya River Basin.

Non-voting members shall include:

- 1) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
- 2) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- 3) Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- 4) U.S. Geological Survey; and

5) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

SECTION 5: The Task Force shall meet at regularly scheduled intervals and at the call of the chair.

SECTION 6: At its first meeting and as necessary thereafter, the Task Force shall establish working groups to accomplish its mission. Workgroup membership shall include at least one Task Force member and may include non-members who are knowledgeable about the Atchafalaya River Basin or otherwise have relevant knowledge or experience.

SECTION 7: Task Force members shall not receive additional compensation or a per diem from the Office of the Governor for serving on the Task Force. Task Force members who are an employee or an elected public official of the state of Louisiana or a political subdivision of the state of Louisiana may seek reimbursement of travel expenses, in accordance with PPM 49, from their employing and/or elected department, agency and/or office. Task Force members who are also a member of the Louisiana Legislature may seek a per diem from the Louisiana State Senate or House of Representatives, as appropriate, for their attendance.

SECTION 8: This Order is effective upon signature and shall continue in effect until, amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the Governor, or terminated by operation of law.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Louisiana in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 14th day of December, 2020.


GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

ATTEST BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE


SECRETARY OF STATE