



## The Platform for Coastal Louisiana

**Restore and protect today, or pay the inevitable bill tomorrow.**

The restoration of Louisiana's wetlands is a national issue. The wetlands, the first line of defense against serious storms, protect millions of people and hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure and commerce in the energy, port and homeland security arenas. Estimates show that, in just the three weeks after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the nation's economy lost \$9.9 billion in energy-related sales, \$2.9 billion in household earnings, and 77,000 jobs. The total cost of the two 2005 hurricanes has topped \$150 billion.

### **The Women of the Storm call for the following actions:**

- **The White House to assign a high-level official** for an intergovernmental focus on and coordination of work with the Corps of Engineers, other federal departments and the state to rebuild our coastal wetlands and enhance hurricane protection.
- **The Corps to implement** a holistic, prioritized, sustainable and comprehensive master plan for coastal restoration and hurricane protection. The plan is already two years overdue.
- **The Congress to appropriate the \$2 billion for Louisiana projects that has been authorized in the 2007 WRDA act**, and to vote to approve and fund the coastal restorations in a fast-track, unified manner instead of a project-by-project basis.
- **Immediate additional federal funding for coastal restoration** to implement the holistic and sustainable master plan developed from state-of-the-art science and engineering knowledge. The realistic window for rebuilding our wetlands is closing. We can't wait until 2017, when revenue from new OCS leases becomes available to the state.
- **A sense of urgency.** With in-depth research and recommendations by the state of Louisiana, the Corps, the Dutch and others, the issue has been studied enough. The time for action is now. We know what needs to be done — all of us must work together to deliver results.
- **Use the Mississippi River to rebuild the marsh.** The Mississippi River created these valuable wetlands, and the river is our only resource to restore them. Nutrients and sediment that now flow out the mouth of the river to create a worrisome "dead zone" that increases in size annually can be used to nourish the wetlands, were they moved to the places where nature intended them to be.

**By 2012, we urge the Corps of Engineers, other federal agencies and the state to combine their resources, move with a unified vision and complete at least one major restoration project to rescue the fragile wetlands that are essential to the energy and economic security of the nation.**



## The Situation: Coastal Restoration and Environmental Protection

**Louisiana fuels and feeds the nation – but Louisiana is washing away!  
According to scientists, the window for coastal wetlands repair is closing.**

- More than 2 million people — 47 percent of the state's population — live in the coastal Louisiana parishes; joining the more than 55% of Americans who live within 50 miles of a coastline
- Louisiana has lost more than 2,300 square miles of land to subsidence and erosion since the 1930s — larger than the size of Delaware. Despite current restoration efforts, another 500 square miles of coast are projected to wash away over the next 50 years, an area equivalent to the island of Manhattan, the city of Washington, D.C., Miami, Des Moines and Carson City.
- We continue to lose a football field of wetland about every 50 minutes — land that acts as speed bumps or sponges for hurricanes, absorbing some of their strength before they move over populated areas.
- Environmentalists attribute the biggest wetlands impacts to unintended consequences of the channelization of the river and the estimated 10,000 miles of canals that crisscross the coastal wetlands of Louisiana, dug to transport oil and lay pipelines as well as for fishing industry and deep-water port uses. The canals and erosion of marshland removed an important natural buffer against storms and amplified Hurricane Katrina's damage.

### **What's at risk as wetlands disappear and hurricanes slam the coast?**

- **About one in every four cars in the U.S. can be fueled for a year from the quantity of oil extracted from Louisiana land and water annually.** Louisiana, which has had offshore drilling since 1947, leads the U.S. in crude oil production and is second in natural gas production. The network of energy facilities located in and around the wetlands produces or transports nearly one-third of the nation's oil and gas supply, and is tied to 50% of the nation's refining capacity. Some 172 active rigs dot the Gulf of Mexico waters, producing about 79 percent of the oil and 72 percent of the natural gas that comes from drilling off the nation's coastlines.
- **One-third of the seafood consumed in the country comes from this domestic source,** important to national food safety and sustainability. The area is also the habitat for 17 endangered species, the wintering ground for more than 5 million waterfowl, and a stopover for millions of neotropical birds on their migrations across the Gulf of Mexico.
- **The port brings in almost half the natural rubber used by the U.S., the coffee beans that brew into one in every five cups Americans consume, and a large proportion of the steel needed to strengthen our infrastructure. More than half of exported U.S. grain reaches the world market through South Louisiana ports annually.** With its proximity to the American Midwest via a 14,500-mile inland waterway system, The Port of New Orleans is at the center of the world's busiest port complex – Louisiana's Lower Mississippi River. More than 6,000 ocean vessels annually move through New Orleans on the Mississippi, making it the world's busiest waterway.



## **Congress Has Taken Action – But Enacting A Comprehensive Platform is Required!**

**The nation has benefited from Louisiana's geography and resources for over 200 years. Now it must invest in restoring the sustainable ecosystem and protecting coast defenses.**

A comprehensive solution requires bold action. Louisiana is willing to pay its fair share, but federal funds are needed. Such assistance is an acknowledgement that, over the last centuries, South Louisiana's coast was altered to serve national energy and navigation interests.

- Over the past three years, Louisiana has contributed \$1.3 billion to rebuilding the wetlands, funding smaller projects outlined in its Master Plan for Coastal Restoration. However, a much greater investment is required to support the necessary larger efforts.
- Louisiana voters passed a constitutional amendment by large margins, mandating that offshore drilling revenues be devoted to coastal restoration and hurricane protection.
- In 2005, Congress passed the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, a four-year plan to help restore coastal areas in oil- and gas-producing states using funds from offshore oil and gas revenues from the Outer Continental Shelf. By the end of 2010, Louisiana will have received almost \$500 million from the program.
- Congress took another positive step when it passed the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, which will give the state offshore revenue royalties for new oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. However, the revenue flow to Louisiana does not begin until in 2017.
- The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 authorized nearly \$2 billion for coastal restoration in Louisiana. But that \$2 billion has not been available. Those projects remain in limbo until Congress appropriates money from the federal budget to fund them. Other requirements of the WRDA bill have also not been met.
  - The Corps' \$23 million "Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Study" is two years overdue and arrives without the specific recommendations mandated by Congress.
  - Congress has fast-tracked Corps projects in the past, but the WRDA-related legislation (unless renewed) is likely to expire before coastal restoration plans come to a vote because the Corps plan was not submitted in a timely manner. Instead of voting on individual projects, Congress should authorize and appropriate money for the state's entire coastal restoration plan.
- The large projects, such as major diversions that would re-introduce fresh water and nutrient-rich sediments from the Mississippi River to the marsh, are most urgent.