



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them since 1940."

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Resolution No. 4D, 2017

SUBJECT: IN SUPPORT OF MAINTAINING FUNDING FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program (NEP) was created by Congress through Section 320 of the Clean Water Act to prevent activities that: might threaten the estuary's public water supply; might be harmful to shellfish, fish and wildlife; and might negatively impact recreational activities for estuary residents; and

WHEREAS, one of the 28 estuaries of national significance in the NEP, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP), is located in south Louisiana between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers. It consists of all or part of 16 parishes including Ascension, Assumption, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and West Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, the BTNEP program plays an integral role in protecting Louisiana's natural, cultural, and economic resources and addressing environmental issues such as non-point source pollution of waterways and coastal land loss – the state's most prevalent environmental issue; and

WHEREAS, BTNEP currently has 51 action plans to address these complex problems and leverages funds from various partners to use the annual federal funding as a tool to bring additional investments; and

WHEREAS, during the last five years, BTNEP-sponsored projects were responsible for the restoration of 10,903 acres through restoration activities including placement of dredged material, debris removal, plantings, erosion control, and invasive species control; and

WHEREAS, projects such as the Fourchon Maritime Forest Ridge and Marsh Restoration address Louisiana's coastal land loss crisis through the reestablishment a chenier ridge, creating approximately 56 acres that serve as critical habitat for Neotropical songbirds that traverse the Mississippi Flyway; and

WHEREAS, declared a sanctuary, this area could become one of the premier birding destinations in Louisiana as there are nearly 200 bird species considered common to abundant at least during part of the year with 64 of these species being year-round inhabitants of the area; and

WHEREAS, BTNEP also provides educators with materials including downloadable lessons, worksheets, workbooks, and videos and partners with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for WETSHOP, a coastal awareness workshop for science, history and social studies teachers with grant funding for this annual workshop being funded by BTNEP; and

WHEREAS, BTNEP currently sits on the 2017 Coastal Master Plan Framework Development Team, which serves as the primary collaborative group providing insight and counsel to the Master Plan Delivery Team; and

(more)

WHEREAS, Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) has asked BTNEP to partner on two CWPPRA projects – the Bayou Dupont and Grand Liard ridge projects; and

WHEREAS, CPRA also partnered with BTNEP during construction of the Caminada Headland Beach and Dune Restoration Project to monitor the endangered Piping Plover and document how an active coastal restoration project influences the distribution of shorebirds along the beach before, during, and after construction; and

WHEREAS, as the health of our coastal ecosystems decline, NEPs work to ensure that federal agencies work together with state, regional, NGO and private partners to better manage resources for the benefit of the nation and to reduce conflicts, redundancies, and inefficiencies that waste time and money; and

WHEREAS, people who live and work near and on estuaries have the greatest stake in sound coastal management, best understand the unique challenges and opportunities in those places, and know the right stakeholders to engage in crafting effective solutions; and

WHEREAS, healthy estuaries benefit the entire nation – the BTNEP area is home to a port which serves the oil and gas community that supports our country's energy needs.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation is in full support of maintaining funding for the National Estuary Program so that each of the estuaries of national significance, especially the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, may continue their work to protect and restore these vital ecosystems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation strongly opposes any action that would reduce funding for the National Estuary Program and, by default, the BTNEP program.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation Board of Directors at their meeting on April 29, 2017 in Lafayette, La.