

April 15, 2020

Senator Patrick Page Cortez
President of the Senate
P.O. Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Representative Clay Schexnayder
Speaker of the House
State Capitol Building
P.O. Box 94062
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen of the Louisiana Legislature:

We write today, as religious leaders, concerning sustainable funding for the Coastal Master Plan. Most of the current funding comes from one-time dollars originating from the Deepwater Horizon disaster, and from offshore revenue sharing from the Gulf of Mexico Energy Securities Act (GOMESA). Very few dollars come directly from the state's annual budget. As it now stands, we will not have nearly enough funding to carry out the State's critical plan to restore our coast. **As stewards of God's creation and the legacy we will be leaving for future generations who might wish to call this beautiful state home, the time to plan ahead is now.**

We pray the Legislature will signal to Washington, D.C. and the world that we are prioritizing coastal restoration by identifying and securing funding sources that will carry us into the future. When we have invested our own dollars in restoration, we increase our credibility and the likelihood of future federal investment. Both are needed for sustainable coastal restoration.

Some other major reasons to plan now for future investment of Louisiana tax dollars include the following points:

- For the next 3 years, the Coastal Program is slated to spend about \$1 billion per year on this crisis.
- Most of the money will be spent on construction of long-awaited projects to build lost lands. These projects will have positive impacts on local economies.
- Nearly all of the funding comes from sources outside of the state's annual budget.
- Recurring annual funding from the state's mineral revenues to the Coastal Trust Fund account for only 1-2% of the nearly 1 billion dollars in planned spending in the coming years for this work: the rest comes from federal funding, disaster funds, and offshore revenues.
- The state's share of the cost of saving our coast should be dramatically increased to show Louisiana's commitment to its coastal area. Legislation will no doubt be required. If the discussion doesn't start soon, oil spill dollars will wind down and Louisiana will fall short of what it will need to continue the necessary work to protect its communities, culture and wildlife.

As a new Legislature, we hope you will recognize that the Coastal Master Plan has been, to date, one of the only true non-partisan efforts in our state. It is only through this non-partisan approach that we have begun to address the existential crisis that threatens the Louisiana we love. With such resolve and commitment to spend precious tax dollars on our future, we can have a positive economic impact through coastal restoration. Together, we can restore ecological balance, create economic opportunities for recreational and commercial enterprises, and care for creation.

Faithfully yours,

Rev. Fred Devall
Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
River Ridge

George D. Bond, II
Junior Warden
St. George's Episcopal Church
New Orleans

Rev. Joseph Clavijo
The Bishop's Environmental Commission
Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
New Orleans

Rev. Dr. Seamus P. Doyle
Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
Kenner

The Very Rev. AJ Heine
Priest
Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
Metairie

Rev. Deacon Charmaine Kathmann
All Saints Episcopal Church
River Ridge

The Rev'd Canon John Kellogg
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Harvey

Rev. Susan LaSalle
United Church of Christ
River Ridge

John Morris
St. George's Episcopal Church
New Orleans

Mike Robertshaw
First Grace United Methodist Church
New Orleans

The Rt. Rev'd Morris Kind Thompson, Jr.
Bishop
Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
New Orleans

Rev. Duane Wiggan-Nettles
Rector
Free Church of the Annunciation Episcopal/ Mount Olivet Episcopal Church
New Orleans

The Rev. Jay Angerer
Rector
All Saints Episcopal Church
River Ridge

Shawn Moses Anglim
Pastor
First Grace United Methodist Church
New Orleans

Nancy Berault
All Saints Episcopal Church
River Ridge

Rev. Ellen Blue
Clergy, The Louisiana Annual Conference
The United Methodist Church
New Orleans

The Rev. Dr. JoAnn Garma, Ed.D., ACPE, BCC
Retired Hospital Chaplain

The Rev. Christopher Golding
Associate Priest
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Baton Rouge

Sister Jane F, Remson, O. Carm.
Main Representative of the Carmelite NGO to the United Nations
New Orleans

The Rev'd Winston Rice
Executive Director and Gulf Coast Chaplain
Maritime Pastoral Institute
Covington

Rev. Cory Sparks
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
New Orleans

Rev. James E. Wilson
Clergy, Louisiana Annual Conference
The United Methodist Church
New Orleans

Rev. Callie Winn Crawford
The United Methodist Church
New Orleans

Chaplain Edith De Vilbiss
The United Methodist Church

Fernell Cryar
Member of Christ Church Covington Creation Care Ministry
Covington

Richard Cryar
Christ Episcopal Church
Covington