



## **NEWS from the LA 1 COALITION**

LA1Coalition.org

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### **LA 1 Coalition Statement Following LA CPRA Meeting**

*LA 1 Coalition Executive Director Henri Boulet issued the following statement after the October 21, 2015 meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA):*

The LA 1 Coalition is grateful to Gov. Jindal and the CPRA for passing a resolution with a goal of providing funding to advance the LA 1 Project. Today's action is further demonstration that the CPRA recognizes the need for a sustainable coast enhanced by hurricane protection, wetland restoration and infrastructure.

While this process began as an effort to utilize project savings funds associated with the RESTORE Act to improve LA 1, we reached an agreement with several conservation organizations to collaborate in achieving funding from the 10 percent provided for infrastructure via the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA). These groups, once opposing the effort to fund LA 1 via RESTORE Act dollars, have recognized both the eligibility for LA 1 and support for our efforts to utilize the infrastructure funding provided from GOMESA.

It is unfortunate that the efforts to utilize project savings of RESTORE Act funding on our nation's poster-child for at-risk critical coastal infrastructure became such a contentious ordeal, but we are happy that the coalition that helped achieve the federal victories of RESTORE, GOMESA and CIAP are reunified to the benefit of our working coast.

We must recognize that we are not in an "either/or position" relative to restoration and infrastructure – we need them both.

As coastal advocate Charlotte Bollinger eloquently professed to the CPRA at its October 2014 meeting, "In Louisiana, wildlife and fisheries coexist with oil and gas, and restoration is intertwined with infrastructure. Without projects like LA 1, we lose our ability to live and work on our coast, and ultimately lose the benefits of coastal restoration."

### **Project Facts**

- LA 1 was the primary and critical conduit for responding to the Macondo spill. Imagine the difficulties in responding to a spill if LA 1 were closed due to a storm event.

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- Because LA 1 provides the only highway access to Port Fourchon and LOOP, a 2011 USDHS-NISAC/ULL-NIMSAT study estimates up to a \$7.8 billion loss of Gross Domestic Product should the 7.1-mile section of at-grade LA 1 between Golden Meadow and Leeville be impassable for 90 days.
- NOAA estimates that increases in sea level will require the road, if not elevated, to be closed 6 percent of the time in 2027. By 2047, that closure rate has been estimated to be 55 percent.
- The corridor also provides access for wetlands and barrier island restoration projects in Lafourche Parish and Grand Isle, including the state's largest project to date at the Caminada Headland. Reliable and safe access will play a critical role in supporting large-scale restoration projects funded by the RESTORE Act in the Barataria and Terrebonne basins.
- The LA 1 Improvement Project passed a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study process, and the Record of Decision to build the elevated highway is authorized by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration in agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- In a thorough and public review, spanning more than three years, all environmental permits were completed in 2004. These documents call for state of the art end-on construction, which nearly eliminates the construction impacts upon wetlands. The LA 1 project is designed with superstructure clearing the FEMA base flood elevation.
- The improvements are estimated to eliminate four fatal crashes per year, and the traveling public could expect a 57 percent reduction in all types of crashes with the construction of eight-foot-wide shoulders on the 19-mile elevated structure.

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*The LA 1 Coalition is a 501(c)4 non-profit corporation working for highway improvements from U.S. Highway 90 to the coast in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana, along the Louisiana Highway 1 corridor. For more information, visit [www.La1Coalition.org](http://www.La1Coalition.org).*