

**Proceedings of the Regular Meeting of the Greater New Orleans
Expressway Commission (GNOEC), Wednesday, January 15, 2026, 10 AM,
South Shore conference room, Metairie, Louisiana 70002**

Call to Order

Chairman Tim Coulon called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Tim Coulon, Chairman; Ralph Cox, Jr., Vice Chairman; and James Tucker, Treasurer. Absent: Justin Clinton, Secretary and Donald Sharp, Assistant Secretary Treasurer. Quorum achieved.

Others Attending: Carlton Dufrechou, Melissa Phillpott, Robert Graham, Thea Andras, Eileen Barthe', Michelle Carlisle, Audrey Williams, and Brandon Fos, GNOEC; Cary Bourgeois, GEC; Gavin Gillen, ASCE; Ben Bartlett, Horizon; Terri Dupre, Meyers; Jan Evans and Lloyd Orferndorf, Volkert; Craig Watson, Blue Williams; and Shelby LaSalle, North Shore Business Council.

Minutes

Mr. Cox moved to accept the minutes of the December 3 meeting. Mr. Tucker seconded. Chairman Coulon, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Tucker voted in favor of the motion.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Coulon thanked everyone for adjusting schedules to meet early on a Thursday and indicated future monthly meetings will return to the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 AM. Mr. Coulon said much had been accomplished in 2025; more is planned in 2026; and asked Mr. Dufrechou to summarize in his report.

General Manager's Report

- Drawbridge, Dec: 3 vessel openings, 4 test openings and 2 incidents.
- Fog Ops: Dec 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29; Jan 7, 8
- Bridge Closures: SB bridge closed Dec 5 for response to 8 vehicle crash with injuries at 8 MM from 6:54 AM to 7:18 AM. SB bridge closed Dec 15 for response to 4 vehicle crash at 17.1 MM from 10:48 AM to 11:18 AM. NB bridge closed Jan 5 for response to overturned pickup with jackknifed trailer at 16.9 MM from 3:05 PM to 4:10 PM.
- Breakdowns: During Dec, we responded to 291 on the CW (229 mechanical and 62 debris) and 12 on the HPL (11 mechanical and 1 debris) for a total of 303 for both bridges.
- Accidents: During Dec, we responded to 13 on the CW (4N, 9S) and 5 at HPL (0 on the HPL) for a total of 18 for both bridges.
- 2025 Accomplishments: We had almost 6 million round trips on the bridge with only 138 accidents and responded to 3,855 calls from motorists in distress. Per mile traveled, the Causeway remains one of the safest major commuting thoroughways in the state. During the 4th Quarter, we sent over 50,000 emails to

toll tag commuters warning of recent text message scams about tolls. Also, we surveyed commuters regarding their Causeway experiences and suggested improvements. Forty-four responses were received. Overall, commuters seem satisfied.

- 2026 Plans: Twelve additional message boards will be installed on the bridge to better inform commuters of Causeway incidents. The entire bridge and all entry and exit lanes will be restriped as well. We've advertised for a new toll system which will include license plate readers. In the future, this could phase out toll booths and convert to all electronic tolling. The process and implementation are involved and lengthy. A problem to overcome with all electronic tolling is delinquent/unrecovered tolls. In some systems, these are over 25%. The initial phase of our process should be complete within a year. For drivers who prefer to pay with cash and credit cards, we will continue to accept these in designated toll lanes. Conversion will be ongoing over the next few years and will be well communicated to the public.

- Ongoing: The decline in trips to the Southshore which began during COVID continues. Last year we had 70,000 fewer trips southbound than in 2024. Comparing 2019 to 2025, southbound trips are down by over ½ million. We are monitoring impacts on future revenue.

Action Items

North Shore Emergency Turn Around/Median Cut, GNOEC Project No. 641, GNOEC Resolution No. 2026-01: On a motion by Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. Cox: During emergency bridge closures, traffic rapidly backs up immediately north of the Toll Plaza. To relieve traffic congestion, a turn around will be constructed in the median between the Toll Plaza and Monroe overpass. Six bids were received for the project. Based upon the recommendation of the Staff and Project Engineers, the GNOEC authorizes the General Manager to execute documents awarding the contract to the low bidder, Kort's Construction Services, Inc. in the amount of \$94,930.00. Chairman Coulon, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Tucker, voted in favor of the motion.

Fender Repair, GNOEC Project No. 436, Plan Change No. 2, GNOEC Resolution No. 2026-02: On a motion by Mr. Cox, seconded by Mr. Tucker: The GNOEC has previously replaced seven of the sixteen hard wired navigation lights on the fender system with solar powered navigation lights. Proposed Plan Change No. 2 will replace the remaining nine hard wired navigation lights with solar powered lights in the amount of \$51,754.60 and 10 additional calendar days. Based upon the recommendation of the Staff and Consulting Engineers, the GNOEC authorizes the General Manager to complete the execution of Plan Change No. 2. Chairman Coulon, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Tucker, voted in favor of the motion.

Messaging Presentation

Ben Bartlett with Horizon summarized finding of reviews of alert messaging by other major bridges nationwide. These included Chesapeake Bay Bridge,

George Washington Bridge, Verrazano Narrows Bridge, San Francisco Bay Bridge, and Mackinac Bridge. Most use message boards, distribute text messages, and depend upon their state's DOT messaging systems. Mr. Bartlett recommended the GNOEC enhance coordination with LADOTD's traffic management center's messaging (statewide 511 system), try to increase enrollment for Causeway text alerts, and review local media contacts for text alerts.

Closing/Next Meeting

Chairman Coulon asked if there was any further business or comments. There being none, Mr. Cox moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Tucker seconded. All concurred and the meeting adjourned at 9:54 AM. The next regular GNOEC meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 11, 2026, in the north shore conference room.



Tim Coulon
Chairman



Justin Clinton
Secretary