



Jeff Landry
Governor

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LOUISIANA PORTS & WATERWAYS INVESTMENT COMMISSION

Marc Hebert
Chairman

Julia Fisher-Cormier
Vice-Chair

LOUISIANA PORTS & WATERWAYS INVESTMENT COMMISSION

April 24th, 2025; 2:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Marc Hebert, Chairman of the Louisiana Ports & Waterways Investment Commission, called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

Attendance

All members were present at the meeting except for Representative Mark Wright, Senator Patrick Connick, Craig Romero, and Bryant Killen. Patrick Broussard is sitting in for Craig Romero, and Cindy Cutrera is sitting in for Bryant Killen.

Opening Remarks

To start the meeting, Mr. Chiasson welcomes everyone to Port Fourchon and introduces some of the members of his board. Secretary Bourgeois then calls LED's Strategic Plan to attention. Because of the Trump Administration's impact on things like tariff structures and shipping lanes, the strategic plan is now more critical than ever.

Update from Taskforce on Navigation and Safety

Captain Wattingly reviewed several updates, including the installation of velocity gauges at the port site, a height sensor on the I-10 bridge expected to be operational within a month, scheduled structural work at Neptune Pass in May, dredging efforts at Pilot Town Anchorage anticipated to restore 2,400 acres, and the need for alert system installations on Mississippi River bridges. He also addressed Aid to Navigation (ATON), noting no current issues but anticipating adjustments once the section from mile 180 to Baton Rouge transitions to a 50-foot draft. Funds from the World Trade Organization have been allocated primarily to the lower Mississippi River, from Memphis downstream, rather than specifically to Baton Rouge. The main priorities identified are dredging Pilot Town Anchorage and developments on the Intercoastal Waterway, with Mr. Chiasson highlighting the importance of maintaining ATON systems.

Update from CPRA representative Rudy Siminoux

Glenn Ledet, CPRA Director (represented by Rudy Siminoux), provided updates on dredging activities, highlighting that since 2007 their efforts have benefited approximately 67,200 acres through a total investment of \$2.6 billion in hydraulic dredging. Projects have significantly scaled since their inception, notably establishing a 13-mile dredging corridor between Barataria Waterway and the Mississippi River. Ledet also detailed collaborations with the Corps of Engineers, including developments at Spanish Pass Marsh and Ridge, and marsh creation at Long Point Bayou in Cameron Parish. He emphasized a new Hydraulic Restoration project in Birds Foot Delta, aiming to beneficially reuse dredged sediments to create 1,000 acres of marsh, with design completion targeted by the end of 2026. Priority projects near Port Fourchon for ecosystem restoration were discussed, including five completed since 2017. Upcoming construction projects mentioned include West Belle Pass Headland repair and Port Fourchon marsh creation. Commissioner Cormier and Chett Chaisson recommended aligning the strategic plan with that of CPRA.

Presentation by Paul Dittman, President of the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway Association

Paul Dittman, President of the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway Association, presented an overview of managing the third busiest waterway in the U.S., primarily transporting petrochemical commodities. He highlighted challenges such as hurricanes, aging infrastructure, and unchecked expansion along waterways. Dittman introduced the Louisiana Movable Bridge Consequence Index, identifying critical bridges such as Black Bayou Swing Bridge, Grand Lake Swing Bridge, and others. He emphasized vulnerabilities, particularly in the region



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between Calcasieu Lock and Leland Bowman, noting this area's high petrochemical freight volume and significant potential risks. He also underscored the urgency of updating archaic bridge technology and showed visual evidence of vessel queues resulting from lock closures. Dittman stressed the need for coordinated funding efforts, referencing letters sent to the LADOTD secretary and the Coast Guard commander to highlight critical safety concerns. Chairman Hebert queried costs and sought support from AWO and the marine industry, aiming to reengage discussions with the governor's office and DOTD. Commissioner Cormier highlighted integration opportunities within existing improvement plans.

Reports from Working Groups and Task Forces

Working groups and task forces provided updates on international trade and cargo, emphasizing rapid monitoring of tariff impacts and preparing for unstable supply chains. The group supports developing a container terminal downstream from the Mississippi bridge and aligning port strategies with those of Louisiana Economic Development (LED). They advocate for promoting Louisiana's ports as a unified complex rather than as competitors, using Florida as a model. A committee chaired by Joe Toomey, comprising five deep-water ports, has been tasked with conducting a SWOT analysis of port strengths and weaknesses along the river, with a report due within 90 days. The Inland and Coastal Working Group discussed establishing a state infrastructure investment bank and exploring funding from a transportation trust fund, with interest from DOTD to support further investigation. They are closely tracking Senate Bill 97, proposing a department similar to CPRA but outside the coastal zone, which could impact port priority projects by requiring legislative approval annually. Commissioner Cormier expressed active monitoring of this bill and a complementary one affecting statewide ports.

Board Member Q and A

Paul Matthews brings up ideas of making presented criteria being presented as anonymous to avoid favoritism. Marc Hebert makes the point that these decisions are based on allotted scores by the committee, which should be made for Louisiana to have the most positive impact, rather than individual ports

Announcements

A date for the next LPWIC meeting will be released within the next week.

Executive Session

We cannot have a session because the commission did not meet quorum.

Adjournment

Chairman Hebert thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 3:33 PM.



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LOUISIANA PORTS & WATERWAYS INVESTMENT COMMISSION January 14th, 2025; 2:00 PM

Member Organization	Appointee/Designee	Present		
		Yes	No	Proxy
Chairman	Marc Hebert	X		
Vice-Chair, Office of Multimodal Commerce	Commissioner Julia Fisher-Cormier	X		
Louisiana Economic Development	Secretary Susan Bourgeois	X		
Louisiana State Senate	Senator Pat Connick		X	
Louisiana House of Representatives	Representative Mark Wright		X	
Port of South Louisiana	Paul Matthews	X		
Port Fourchon	Chett Chiasson	X		
Port of Iberia	Craig Romero			X
Port of Morgan City	Raymond "Mac" Wade	X		
Central Louisiana Regional Port	Ben Russo	X		
Lake Providence Port Commission	Bryant Killen			X
Louisiana Railroads Association	Carmack Blackmon	X		
Louisiana Motor Transport Association	Randy Guillot	X		
	Total Present	12		
	Quorum Not Achieved			