



November 9, 2015

Dear Candidate:

Congratulations on making the run-off in the gubernatorial election. We look forward to continued discussions that benefit the coast during this run-off period.

We also applaud your recent leadership on the issue related to LA 1 and general infrastructure funding coming from RESTORE buckets. Your understanding of the importance of protecting coastal funds is critical. In that context, we need to ask you to address additional fiscal issues related to coastal restoration.

The first issue is the money owed to the Federal Government by the state of Louisiana supporting the New Orleans and surrounding areas Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). The first payment of the 30-year payback scheme, structured by Governor Jindal to repay the \$1.8 billion debt, comes due very early in the new Governor's term. Estimated in the Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Plan to be \$93 million per year beginning in FY 2017, these payments represent a significant new recurring cost to the state.

If our presently identified coastal funds are used to pay this obligation, it will nearly cripple the state's coastal program. We would appreciate you sharing how you would manage this obligation without diverting existing coastal funds like GOMESA and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Trust Fund. The FY 2016 Coastal Annual Plan suggests this payment should be requested from the Capital Outlay budget each year. Do you feel that is an appropriate funding stream? If not, we would like to hear your thoughts on exactly how this debt may be paid.

A second issue is the level of restoration funding generated by the state. As you are probably aware, the state's only annual recurring commitment to coastal funding has remained nearly the same since 1989, somewhere between \$25 and \$35 million. In fact, since this funding is tied to state mineral revenues, the state's contribution to coastal funding actually decreased by approximately \$10 million within the past year. Given the tremendous backlog of projects in the Coastal Master Plan, and the \$50 billion price tag—that some economists estimate to be nearer to \$100 billion—do you believe the state should invest more in coastal funding, and are you willing to advocate for additional state coastal dollars during your term? As Governor, where would you suggest these dollars could be found?

Now is a pivotal time to identify solutions to the aforementioned issues due to the combination of factors that include:

- 1) The signing of the recent Consent Decree and subsequent Deepwater Horizon funding make clear the likely level of federal funding available for the next 17 years;
- 2) Dealing with the state's structural budget deficit may require ongoing commitments to recurring state funds that will lock out restoration funding ; and
- 3) The upcoming change in administrations can inject fresh thinking into these fiscal discussions and decisions.

As coastal advocates, we wish to know how you would propose to deal with these challenges if you are elected governor on November 21st. In order for that response to be timely, we request a response from your office by November 16<sup>th</sup>. We will commit to sharing those responses with the coastal community with whom we regularly engage.

Sincerely,

The National Wildlife Federation  
National Audubon Society  
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

Environmental Defense Fund  
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation  
Coast Builders Coalition