



Coastal Restoration, Interested Parties:

In response to the questions you posed on Coastal Restoration funding I am providing the following answers and information. When I am governor you will always have a seat at the table as we prioritize our coast and return honesty to the state budgeting process.

1. 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.

**I do not support diverting existing coastal funds to repay the HSDRRS debt. Capital Outlay funds may need to be used to address some of this payback, but the state will need to address the HSDRRS payback as part of its structural budget reforms. My plans to address the structural budget problems so we can budget with honesty and integrity to meet all our obligations and priorities are available at [www.johnbelforlouisiana.com](http://www.johnbelforlouisiana.com) .**

2. 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?

**I look forward to working with stakeholders to ensure timely funding of coastal restoration projects.**

**We have lost nearly 2000 square miles of coastal land mass over the last 100 years. The economic contributions of Louisiana’s coast exceed \$20 billion per year. But much of this is threatened, including our fisheries, wildlife, tourism, oil and gas, and shipping and navigation industries.**

**We must immediately match the scale of the crisis with the response, implementing unprecedented coordination and taking three primary actions:**

- **Create certainty of funding**
- **Ensure the funding is spent only on coastal restoration master plan and priority of projects**
- **Fully and convincingly making the case to the Congress and the Administration that coastal restoration in Louisiana is a national priority worthy of funding tens of billions of dollars**

**The Coastal Restoration Master Plan is a living document which must be constantly revisited through the lens of new and better science.**

**Funding will soon be available in amounts that will be meaningful, including \$100 million per year from the Breaux Act, \$1.2 billion from the BP criminal fine, up to \$200 million from GOMESA, \$5 billion over fifteen years through NRDA, and another \$787 million over 15 years through the Restore Act. But the estimated cost of funding coastal restoration is \$50 billion over the next 10 years. I am fully committed to using these funds only for coastal restoration so that we can prove we are good stewards of our funding when we attempt to convince the rest of the nation to partner with us.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bel' with a stylized flourish.

John Bel Edwards