

House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works

Minutes of Meeting
2021 Regular Session
May 10, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Vincent J. Pierre, chairman of the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. in Room 3, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Vincent J. Pierre, chairman
Representative Kendrick "Ken" Brass, vice chairman
Representative Mack Marcel Cormier
Representative Kathy Edmonston
Representative Michael "Gabe" Firment
Representative Barbara Reich Freiberg
Representative Foy Bryan Gadberry
Representative Cedric B. Glover
Representative Dodie Horton
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Charles Anthony Owen
Representative Robert "Bob" Owen
Representative Rodney Wayne Schamerhorn
Representative Larry Selders

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Patricia "Pat" Moore

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

LeeAnne Sharlow, attorney
Charlesia Bibbins, attorney
Brandy Phillips, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms
Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms
Claire Dill, clerk

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**House Bill No. 623 by Representative McFarland**

Representative Pierre announced that action on House Bill No. 623, which provides for increases to fees and self-generated revenues of the Department of Transportation and Development, was voluntarily deferred.

House Resolution No. 47 by Representative Gadberry

Representative Gadberry presented House Resolution No. 47, which urges and requests the Department of Transportation and Development to study and work with Interstate 20 Amtrak partners to bring passenger rail service connecting Texas and Mississippi through North Louisiana.

Secretary Shawn Wilson, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-1200, spoke for information only.

Representative Horton offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 47 favorably. Without objection, House Resolution No. 47 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Firmont, Freiberg, Gadberry, Glover, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Robert Owen, and Schamerhorn voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 36 by Representative Brown

Representative Brown presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 36, which urges and requests the Department of Transportation and Development to study the feasibility of having two dedicated lanes to exit eastbound from the Horace Wilkinson Bridge.

Secretary Shawn Wilson, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-1200, spoke for information only.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 36 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 36 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas

and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Freiberg, Gadberry, Glover, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Robert Owen, and Selders voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 587 by Representative Robert Owen

Representative Robert Owen presented House Bill No. 587, which provides relative to the regulation of unmanned aerial and aircrafts systems and the Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee. Representative Robert Owen provided a handout entitled "Drones in Louisiana: Helping The Pelican State Take Flight", Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Pierre offered amendments to:

1. Make technical changes.
2. Add a provision that nothing in present and proposed law can preempt the exclusive sovereignty of airspace of the United States. Further, any contradictions by interpretation or application of any provision to regulate unmanned aircraft systems and all unmanned aerial systems shall be null.
3. Delete a provision of proposed law that specified that flight by an unmanned aerial system over the lands and waters of La. is lawful, unless at such a low altitude that causes interference with existing use and unlawful without consent, except in the case of a forced landing.
4. Delete a provision of proposed law that provided that any political subdivision may lease space for private purposes pending the approval of the governing body.
5. Add a provision that flight by an unmanned aerial system over the lands and waters of La. is lawful unless expressly prohibited by law.
6. Add the following members to the La. Drone Advisory Committee:
 - (a) One member selected by the president of the La. Senate.
 - (b) One member selected by the speaker of the La. House of Representatives.
 - (c) One member from the La. Flood Protection Authority appointed by the president of the La. Flood Protection Authority.

- (d) One member from the Houma Terrebonne Airport Commission appointed by the chairman of the Houma Terrebonne Airport Commission.
 - (e) One member from the Pelican Chapter of the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International appointed by the chairman of the Pelican Chapter of the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International.
 - (f) One member from the Fletcher Technical Community College appointed by the chancellor of the Fletcher Technical Community College.
7. Add a provision that specifies that the member of the committee serving as a liaison to the Federal Aviation Administration is tasked with addressing any issues with federal, state, and local laws governing unmanned aircraft systems and unmanned aerial systems.

Representative Pierre offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Edmonston, Freiberg, Gadberry, Glover, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Robert Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yeas.

Mr. Eric Peterson, Pelican Institute, 342 Lafayette Street, (819) 451-0544, spoke in support of House Bill No. 587.

Secretary Shawn Wilson, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-1200, spoke for information only.

Mr. R. George Rey Sr., AUSSI & INFRAGARD, 3712 Lake Aspen Drive West, Gretna, LA 70056, (504) 908-8784, spoke in support of House Bill No. 587.

Representative C. Travis Johnson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 587 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 587 was reported with amendments by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Glover, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Robert Owen, and Selders voted yeas.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 2 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 220 by Representative Gregory Miller

Representative Gregory Miller presented House Bill No. 220, which provides relative to public works contracts.

Mr. Derrell Cohoon, Capitol Partners Associated General Contractors, 717 North 5th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 921-9233, spoke in support of House Bill No. 220.

Ms. Monika Gerhart, City of New Orleans, 1300 Perdido Street, New Orleans, LA 70112, (504) 258-9294, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 220.

Representative Schamerhorn offered a motion to report House Bill No. 220 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 220 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Glover, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Robert Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 684 by Representative Gregory Miller

Representative Gregory Miller presented House Bill No. 684, which removes St. Charles Parish from the Lafourche Basin Levee District and creates the St. Charles Parish Levee District.

Mr. Matthew Jewell, St. Charles Parish president, no address provided, (504) 201-2477, spoke in support of House Bill No. 684.

Mr. Chip Kline, CPRA, 1051 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70820, (225) 342-4367, spoke for information only.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 684. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 684 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, 23 in opposition, and 11 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 631 by Representative Goudeau

Representative Goudeau presented House Bill No. 631, which creates the Atchafalaya Basin Bridge Commission and the Atchafalaya Basin Bridge Commission police. Representative Goudeau

presented a Power Point entitled "Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge" and provided a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Pierre offered amendments to:

1. Make technical changes.
2. Delete a provision of proposed law that required the boundary and jurisdiction of the commission to be coextensive with the boundaries of Iberville and St. Martin parishes.
3. Add a provision to require the boundary and jurisdiction of the commission to be the span of the bridge and prohibit the boundary and jurisdiction from extending beyond the footprint of the bridge into either Iberville or St. Martin parishes.
4. Add a provision to require the operational facility of the commission to be located near mile marker 121 on Interstate I-10.

Representative Pierre offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Robert Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

Mr. Carlton Dufrechoe, Causeway Bridge, 3939 North Causeway Boulevard, Metairie, LA 70002, (504) 835-3118, spoke in support of House Bill No. 631.

Secretary Shawn Wilson, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-1200, spoke for information only.

Lt. Robert Burns, Louisiana State Police, 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-4239, spoke for information only.

Mr. Tony Clayton, 18th JDC District Attorney Office, no address provided, Port Allen, LA, (225) 921-7162, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 631.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 631. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 631 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Robert Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support, 8 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 625 by Representative Deshotel

Representative Deshotel presented House Bill No. 625, which changes the composition of the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission.

Representative C. Travis Johnson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 625 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 625 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

House Bill No. 608 by Representative Gaines

On behalf of Representative Gaines, Secretary Shawn Wilson, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-1200, presented House Bill No. 608, which provides for \$100,000 death benefit for an employee of the Department of Transportation and Development who is killed in a hazardous situation in the course and scope of his employment.

Representative Schamerhorn offered a motion to report House Bill No. 608 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 608 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

House Bill No. 565 by Representative Huval

Representative Huval presented House Bill No. 565, which provides relative to the operation of a motor vehicle while using wireless telecommunication devices.

Representative C. Travis Johnson in the chair.

Jennifer Smith, stopdistractions.org, P.O. Box 6743, River Forest, IL 60305, (708) 334-3058, spoke in support of House Bill No. 565.

Chairman Pierre in the chair.

Mr. Glenn McGovern, SELT, P.O. Box 516, Metairie, LA 70004, (504) 456-3610, spoke in support of House Bill No. 565.

Mr. Don Redman, AAA, 3445 North Causeway Boulevard, Metairie, LA 70004, (504) 838-2320, spoke in support of House Bill No. 565.

Mr. Dennis Borke, 5525 Gladys Street, Metairie, LA 70004, (504) 885-2630, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 565.

Representative Firment offered a motion to report House Bill No. 565 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 565 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Glover, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support, 1 in opposition, and 4 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 1 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Selders offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Pierre, Brass, Cormier, Edmonston, Firment, Freiberg, Gadberry, Glover, Horton, C. Travis Johnson, Charles Owen, Schamerhorn, and Selders voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Vincent J. Pierre
House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works

Date adopted:

The committee has acknowledged on _____, that these minutes were prepared in accordance with the rules of the House of Representatives.