

## **House Committee on Appropriations**

Minutes of Meeting  
2022 Regular Session  
March 15, 2022

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman  
Representative Tony Bacala  
Representative Barbara W. Carpenter  
Representative R. Dewith Carrier  
Representative Raymond J. Crews  
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel  
Representative Mary DuBuisson  
Representative Rick Edmonds  
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman  
Representative Brett F. Geymann  
Representative John R. Illg, Jr.  
Representative Timothy P. Kerner  
Representative Rodney Lyons  
Representative C. Denise Marcelle  
Representative Jack G. McFarland  
Representative Blake Miguez  
Representative Dustin Miller  
Representative Troy D. Romero  
Representative Francis C. Thompson, vice chairman  
Representative Christopher Turner  
Representative Debbie Villio  
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative Jason Hughes

#### **STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dazia Briscoe, committee administrative assistant  
Stephanie Little, attorney  
Chris Henry, budget analyst  
David Lehman, budget analyst  
Claire Vermaelen, capital outlay specialist

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Faye Talbot, sergeant at arms

**III. BUSINESS**

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to adopt an amendment to the committee rules regarding appropriations for judgments against the state. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Deshotel, DuBuisson, Illg, Kerner, Marcelle, Thompson, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

**Discussion of the FY 22-23 Budget for:**

**Dept. of Environmental Quality**

Ms. Claire Vermaelen, capital outlay specialist, House Fiscal Division (HFD), 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8623, presented an overview and discussed the FY 22-23 budget for the Department of Environmental Quality.

Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, secretary, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), P.O. Box 4301, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-3950, presented opening comments to the committee. In his remarks, Secretary Brown discussed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, loan forgiveness for underprivileged communities, pollution prevention money, the diesel emission prevention law, and cities non-compliant according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water quality list.

Secretary Brown and Ms. Karyn Andrews, undersecretary, DEQ, P.O. Box 4303, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-3845, discussed the state match for federal dollars, plans to allocate funds to disadvantaged communities, and efforts to allow rural communities to apply for assistance by allotting 2% for technical assistance.

Secretary Brown discussed regionalization and consolidation efforts to create water management districts for parishes in dire need to share in revenue and management with Representative Thompson.

Secretary Brown discussed a superfund site led by the EPA to address the issues in the Alsen community with Representative Carpenter.

Secretary Brown and Ms. Andrews discussed the formula used to allocate dollars from the Clean Water State Revolving Sewage Fund and the criteria for loan forgiveness with Representative Marcelle.

Secretary Brown discussed the department's efforts to address pollution and Louisiana's air quality standards with Representative Marcelle.

Secretary Brown and Ms. Andrews discussed the Clean Water State Revolving Sewage Fund match requirements, water management districts, the increased tire fee, and tire dump sites with Representative Marcelle.

Secretary Brown discussed the fire that occurred at the Cottonport Monofill, plans to clean the site, and the issue of illegal dumping with Representative Deshotel.

Ms. Andrews discussed the department's budget allocated for technology services from the Office of Technology Services (OTS) with Representative Deshotel.

Secretary Brown discussed particles contained in dust in River Ridge, LA, and the criminal investigation division for illegal tire dumping with Representative Illg.

Ms. Andrews discussed the criteria for the Bipartisan Infrastructure dollars with Representative DuBuisson.

Secretary Brown discussed the department's authority to remove sunken boats and debris after a hurricane with Representative DuBuisson.

Secretary Brown discussed federal requirements for the Bipartisan Infrastructure dollars and royalty incentives to lend people to extract sand from dry land with Representative Crews.

Secretary Brown and Ms. Andrews discussed the percentage of the department's budget allocated to OTS with Representative Crews.

Secretary Brown discussed the role of Water Sector dollars in improving water and sewer conditions and aiding consolidation efforts with Representative Miller.

Secretary Brown discussed the effect inflation might have on the cost of current projects with Representative McFarland.

Ms. Andrews discussed the department's loss of revenue with Representative McFarland.

**Dept. of Natural Resources**

Mr. Chris Henry, budget analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA, 70802, (225) 342-1394, presented an overview and discussed the FY 22-23 budget for the Department of Natural Resources.

Secretary Thomas Harris, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2710, presented opening comments to the committee. In his remarks, Secretary Harris discussed the department's budget increase for federal funds, the state's energy conservation efforts, the request for additional full-time equivalent positions, and the impact the Russia-Ukraine conflict had on the oil and gas market.

Secretary Harris discussed the Class VI injection well activity for carbon sequestration in Tangipahoa Parish and public hearings with Representative Wheat.

Secretary Harris discussed orphan wells and the Oilfield Site Restoration Program with Representative Thompson.

Secretary Harris discussed the federal funds associated with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for plugging and restoration with Representative Romero.

Secretary Harris and Mr. Mark Brady, undersecretary, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8844, discussed the process for obtaining grants and bidding contractors for the Oilfield Site Restoration Program, the procurement process to meet grant requirements, and the timeline to obligate grant funds with Representative Romero.

Secretary Harris discussed solar farms' protection during hurricane season with Representative Romero.

Secretary Harris and Mr. Brady discussed the timeline to increase charging station infrastructure in the state for electric vehicles with Representative Illg.

Secretary Harris discussed emergency permits for drainage districts affected by hurricanes and flood protection for levee systems with Representative Kerner.

Secretary Harris and Mr. Brady discussed how the department planned to obligate federal funds, federal guidelines for an initial grant, decommissioned wind turbines, royalties for dredging, and the use of shredded tires for fracking with Representative Crews.

Secretary Harris discussed the prioritization of plugging wells with the greatest risk of harm and the radiation levels contained in orphan wells with Representative Miller.

Secretary Harris discussed the new positions within the department with Representative Wheat.

**Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries**

Mr. David Lehman, budget analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9101, presented an overview and discussed the FY 22-23 budget for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Secretary Jack Montoucet, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF), 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 454-3317, presented opening comments to the committee. In his remarks, Secretary Montoucet discussed how the price of oil affected the department, the revenue generated from carbon sequestration, and the "Text-to-Tag" program.

Mr. Bryan McClinton, undersecretary, DWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 765-5021, discussed the changes regarding the reduction of issued licenses, the deficiencies created as a result, and its effects on the projected revenue with Representative Zeringue.

Secretary Montoucet discussed Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and waste tires with Representative Carrier.

Secretary Montoucet and Mr. McClinton discussed the department's revenues and expenditures from the Conservation Fund, how projected revenue is estimated, the effect of commodity prices on production, and royalty incentives for companies to drill in the state with Representative Miguez.

Mr. Lehman discussed the fiscal note for Act 356 of the 2021 Regular Legislative Session with Representative Miguez.

Secretary Montoucet discussed the expense of paying the Office of the Attorney General for legal action for challenging the turtle exclusion devices with Representative Kerner.

Secretary Montoucet discussed the litigation regarding bear hunting in the state with Representative Wheat.

Secretary Montoucet and Mr. McClinton discussed the progress of Louisiana's reintroduction project to establish a population of whooping cranes in the state with Representative Zeringue.

Secretary Montoucet and Mr. McClinton discussed the department's effort to provide information to the public on the black bear, hunting license locations, and the possibility of establishing a turkey population in Louisiana with Representative Thompson.

Secretary Montoucet discussed the department's effort to address the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) found in deer in Tensas Parish with Representative Deshotel.

#### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Representative Deshotel offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 22 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, Deshotel, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Geymann, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Dustin Miller, Romero, Thompson, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jerome "Zee" Zeringue  
House Committee on Appropriations