

**House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works
and
Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways, and Public Works**

Minutes of Meeting
2024-2025 Interim
February 26, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Ryan Bourriaque, chair of the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works, called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

HOUSE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Ryan Bourriaque, chair
Representative Chad Michael Boyer
Representative Jacob Braud
Representative Kellee Hennessy Dickerson
Representative Bryan Fontenot, vice chair
Representative Patricia "Pat" Moore
Representative Tammy T. Phelps
Representative Rodney Wayne Schamerhorn
Representative Phillip Eric Tarver
Representative Joy Walters
Representative Jeffrey Fons "Jeff" Wiley

HOUSE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Tehmi Jahi Chassion
Representative Steven Jackson
Representative C. Travis Johnson

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Patrick Connick, chair
Senator Mark Abraham
Senator Patrick McMath

SENATE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Gary Carter, vice chair
Senator Heather Cloud
Senator Edward Price
Senator William "Bill" Wheat

HOUSE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Allison Williams, House attorney
Darcas Deverteuil, House committee administrative assistant

SENATE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Archana Cadge, Senate attorney
Christine Peck, Senate attorney
Serena Mohammad, Senate secretary

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Mytris Jarrell, House sergeant at arms
Bruce Thornton, Senate sergeant at arms

III. BUSINESS

To receive an update on the Louisiana Transportation Infrastructure Funds (LTIF) from the 2024 Regular Session

Joe Donahue, LA DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., no other information provided, spoke for information only and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records, to give the committee an update on the Louisiana Transportation Infrastructure Funds from the 2024 Regular Session. He also introduced new staff changes that have taken place at the department.

Representative Bourriaque and Tarver asked Secretary Donahue questions about the appropriated LTIF funds, what projects qualify, and coastal use permits.

Representative Schamerhorn asked questions about the appropriated funds and whether those were actual funds or funds that the department could just bond against.

Barry Keeling, DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access, spoke for information only and informed Representative Schamerhorn that the federal funds were appropriations with an obligation limit that the department can charge against and after the expenditure the federal government will reimburse the department. He further explained that this is how most funding works and provided a few scenarios of when actual cash funds are received.

Secretary Donahue and Barry Keeling answered questions from committee members about the LTIF letting schedules and projects that were provided in the handout, Exhibit A.

To receive an update on the Department of Transportation and Development Strategic Improvement Plan

Joe Donahue, LA DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., no other information provided, spoke for information only on the update on the DOTD Strategic Improvement Plan and gave an overview of how the process of working with Boston Consulting Group (BCG) went following Governor

Landry's executive order and elaborated on the main findings and goals of the report which included project delivery issues.

Chairman Bourriague commented on the civil service and staffing pay scale disparities and asked Secretary Donahue what were the next steps for staffing. Secretary Donahue answered and explained in detailed the difficulty of making that happen under the current structure of salaries being paid from the Transportation Trust Fund.

Senator Abraham emphasized that although things need to be changed he wants to make sure that programs such as Port Priority do not change or take any funding cuts in the process.

Senator Connick in the chair.

Committee members asked Secretary Donahue a series of questions about the employment turnover rate at the department and the BCG study findings.

To receive an update from the Department of Transportation and Development on the construction and status of the new Belle Chasse Bridge and tunnel replacement project

Senator Connick gave members a brief overview of the Belle Chasse Bridge project time line and the impact that this project will have on the citizen of Plaquemines Parish.

Joe Donahue, LA DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., no other information provided, spoke for information only and explained the project's accruelement of liquidated damages and the approximate payment due dates for this project.

Nicholas Olivier, LA DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only and answered questions from Senator Connick.

To receive an update from the Department of Transportation and Development on the Peter's Road Bridge and extension project

Senator Connick explained the uniqueness of Plaquemines Parish as it has a one way in one way out design and expressed the need for the Peters Road project to be completed and asked a series of questions about the plans for the project.

Joe Donahue, LA DOTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., no other information provided, spoke for information only and answered Senator Connick's questions in detail.

Charles Tillotson, PPHTD, 1201 Capitol Access Rd., no other information provided, spoke for information only and contributed to the discussion about contract negotiation on future steps in the Peters Road project.

Representative Braud joined the discussion and asked Secretary Donahue a few questions about the project contract and time lines.

Senator Connick urged the importance of including the port and the parish in the discussion of the project details and decisions moving forward. He also recognized Councilman Newsom of Plaquemines Parish and congratulated Greg Cromer, the new Legislative Liaison at the department.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Ryan Bourriaque
House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works