

House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Minutes of Meeting

2024-2025 Interim

March 18, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Neil Riser, member of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Brett F. Geymann, chair
Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative Tehmi Jahi Chassion
Representative Kimberly Landry Coates
Representative Shane Mack
Representative Danny McCormick
Representative Neil Riser
Representative Lauren Ventrella
Representative Jerome Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Jason Brian DeWitt
Representative Jessica Domangue
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe
Representative Jacob Jules Landry
Representative Joseph A. Orgeron, vice chair

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robin Stalder, attorney
Jennifer Winkler, legislative analyst
Brandy Ladmirault, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Rebecca Marshall, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION

Representative Riser in the chair.

To receive information on wetland assimilation projects pursuant to House Study Request No. 7 of the 2024 Regular Session

R. Eugene Turner, public, 925 Fulwar Skipwith Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, presented a PowerPoint titled "Assimilation Wetlands: Oversold and Underperforming" and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Aurelia Giacometto, LDEQ, no address provided, stated that LDEQ would need to return at a later date to speak on the topic and requested that members email any questions they have for the department to be answered at that later date.

Rebecca Triche, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, 8480 Bluebonnet Boulevard #F, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke for information only.

Rendell Myers, LDWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA, spoke for information only and explained a letter that was previously submitted per request of Representative Coates.

Kristi Trail, Pontchartrain Conservancy, P.O. Box 6965, Metairie, LA 70009, presented a PowerPoint titled "Pontchartrain Conservancy" and provided handouts, Exhibit B and Exhibit C, which are included in the committee records.

Kyle Balkum, Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources, 1124 Highland Park Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only.

To receive information regarding the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's waste tire program and the Waste Tire Management Dedicated Fund Account

Aurelia Giacometto, no witness card provided, spoke for information only. She emphasized that waste tire management is currently a priority issue for the department. DEQ is coordinating with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the Department of Natural Resources to address waste tires as an environmental and regulatory concern. The department is reviewing existing regulations and enforcement practices related to waste tire haulers, processors, and disposal methods. She also mentioned that a series of six regional waste tire town halls were held across the state with participation from the Governor's Office, the Lieutenant Governor's Office, Keep Louisiana Beautiful, municipal officials, business owners, and residents. Feedback from these meetings indicated strong public concern and a desire for regulatory and programmatic changes rather than maintaining existing practices.

Michelle Barnett, LDEQ, no address provided, reviewed the current status of the fund, noting a 2024 balance of \$7.6 million and ongoing questions regarding how the fund is financed and its revenue sources. Members discussed the need to increase revenue growth, with a goal of raising the revenue contribution from the current 5 percent to 10 percent, and potentially to 20 percent, to improve long-term sustainability and project viability. Recycling and other supplemental revenue sources were identified as possible options, and the committee also discussed the potential need to pursue grant funding if cash reserves decline. Action items include identifying additional revenue streams, developing strategies to increase revenue percentages, and exploring grant opportunities as a contingency plan.

Representative McCormick provided a handout, Exhibit D, which is included in the committee records and expressed his concerns about the ongoing issue of waste tires in North Caddo Parish.

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

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Mack offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 5 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Chassion, Mack, McCormick, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Brett F. Geymann
House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Date adopted: