

House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Minutes of Meeting
2025 Regular Session
June 3, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Brett F. Geymann, chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Brett F. Geymann, chair
Representative Jacob Braud
Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Kimberly Landry Coates
Representative Jessica Domangue
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe
Representative Jacob Jules Landry
Representative Shane Mack
Representative Danny McCormick
Representative Joseph A. Orgeron, vice chair
Representative Neil Riser
Representative Lauren Ventrella
Representative Jerome Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative Jason Brian DeWitt

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Cheryl Domino, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**House Resolution No. 249 by Representative Echols**

Representative Echols presented House Resolution No. 249, which creates a task force to study and recommend policies to promote Small Nuclear Reactors in Louisiana.

Representative C. Travis Johnson offered an amendment that originated in committee to:

- (1) Add the dean of the College of Engineering at University of La. at Lafayette or his designee and the chairman of the Public Service Commission or his designee to the task force.

Representative C. Travis Johnson offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, and Zeringue voted yea.

Representative Orgeron offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 249 with amendments. Without objection, House Resolution No. 249 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

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

House Resolution No. 214 by Representative Kerner

Representative Kerner presented House Resolution No. 214, which urges and requests the secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services to ban imported seafood until proper testing and inspections can be performed.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 214 favorably. Without objection, House Resolution No. 214 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Orgeron, Riser, and Zeringue voted yea.

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

Senate Bill No. 244 by Senator Hensgens

Senator Hensgens presented Senate Bill No. 244, which provides for the Dept. of Energy and Natural Resources.

Representative Geymann offered amendments to:

- (1) Restore language that was previously removed from the oilfield site restoration fund regarding the timing of payments and the price that oilfield restoration fees are based on.
- (2) Add proposed law to the water resource management authority of the department, requiring the department to prioritize public water supplies and providing an exemption for agricultural uses.
- (3) Provide for the disclosure of information received by the State Mineral and Energy Board, the office of mineral resources, and the office of state resources during a competitive bid or application process that may be deemed confidential, and authorize rulemaking regarding disclosure.
- (4) Make certain present law definitions applicable to all of Subtitle I of Title 30 of the Revised Statutes of Louisiana.
- (5) Amend the policy of the state regarding the public purpose of carbon dioxide sequestration by removing declared public purposes in present law of reducing greenhouse emissions and withdrawal of sequestered carbon dioxide for enhanced oil recovery.
- (6) Add a definition for "common carriers" to the Louisiana Geologic Sequestration of Carbon Dioxide Act.
- (7) Repeal a confidentiality of business records provision that was enacted in anticipation of the state being granted primacy over Class VI wells.
- (8) Require the secretary to find that a pipeline transporting carbon dioxide for storage is either a common carrier or that it requires expropriation for absentee landowners before issuing a certification of public convenience and necessity for the pipeline.

- (9) Require advance notice via certified mail operators of record, mineral owners, and landowners within a certain proximity to Class VI-related well permit applications.
- (10) Amend the process for remediation of oilfield and exploration and production sites.
- (11) Provide for the applicability of proposed law changes to the remediation process.
- (12) Add a voluntary process for resolution of disputes that fall within the department's jurisdiction.
- (13) Repeal oil spill prevention coordinator duties relative to derelict vessels and structures.
- (14) Repeal a requirement that the State Mineral and Energy Board manage distributions from mineral leases owned in indivision by five hundred or more persons.
- (15) Add the executive director of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission to the Natural Resources Commission.
- (16) Add a provision to allow the legislature to establish advisory committees by resolution, which provide for membership and for the term of the advisory committee if it is more than the default term of one year, to advise the Natural Resources Commission on matters within its jurisdiction.
- (17) Remove the requirement for the secretary to approve the removal of field transmission, flow, and gathering lines that it must be after abandonment.
- (18) Permit the secretary to require each pipeline owner to inspect pipelines and remove the requirement that it be inspected not less than once a year and for the operator to employ a procedure to determine the depth of cover over the line and to report that information to the secretary.
- (19) Remove the requirement for the secretary to require pipeline owners to notify the dept. of abandonment or nonuse of the pipeline for six months or more.
- (20) Revise the requirements for the secretary to adopt rules and regulations to specify at minimum the procedures for requesting and approving expedited processing, as well as public notices and document and timeline processes.
- (21) Provide for a timeline, for reconsideration, and for judicial review of the expedited permitting process.

- (22) Add use of the La. Asset Management Pool to the Natural Resources Financial Security Fund, the Mineral and Energy Operation Fund, and the La. Natural Resources Trust Authority.
- (23) Require the state treasurer to transfer to the Natural Resources Financial Security Fund any remaining portion of an appropriation made to the Dept. of Conservation and Energy for a specific purpose in the General Appropriation Act that remains unexpended or unobligated.
- (24) Remove provision to reimburse other funds, including the Oilfield Site Restoration Fund, for costs of addressing obligations covered by financial security programs.
- (25) Require the secretary and the commissioner of administration to enter into and maintain a memorandum of understanding regarding payments for mineral leases associated with funding their respective depts.
- (26) Change the applicability from oyster fisherman to oyster leaseholders for the secretary to establish procedures for damages to oyster beds from oil and gas activities.
- (27) Add uncodified provision to resolve a conflict between this bill and HB 605 of this session regarding fees for expedited processing by the dept., in the event that both bills pass.
- (28) Add effective dates.
- (29) Make technical changes.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Mack, McCormick, Ventrella, and Zeringue voted yea.

Dustin Davidson, LDENR, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 244.

Tyler Gray, LDENR, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 244.

Governor Jeff Landry addressed the committee in support of Senate Bill No. 244.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to adopt the three-minute rule. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, Mack, McCormick, and Ventrella voted yea.

Kathy Wascon, LEAN, 1255 Aberdeen, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 244.

Kevin Hayes, Louisiana Landowners Association, 412 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 244.

Toriano Wells, City of Tallulah, 410 Gayle Street, Tallulah, LA, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 244.

Merrilee Montgomery, Sierra Club, 650 North Sixth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 244.

Antonio Bell, City of Tallulah, 204 Ann Street, Tallulah, LA spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 244.

Don Caffery, Natural Resources Management Association, 822 Herding Street, Suite 307, Lafayette, LA 70503, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 244.

Representative Geymann offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 244 with amendments, to which Representative Orgeron objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and Senate Bill No. 244 was reported with amendments by a vote of 13 yeas and 2 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Coates, Domangue, C. Travis Johnson, Kerner, LaCombe, Jacob Landry, Mack, McCormick, Riser, and Ventrella voted yea. Representatives Orgeron and Zeringue voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, 10 in opposition, and 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for Senate Bill No. 244.

House Resolution No. 274 by Representative Butler

Representative Butler presented House Resolution No. 274, which urges and requests the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to restore the authority for the general health of Cocodrie Lake to the Cocodrie Lake Game and Fish Commission.

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 274 favorably. Without objection, House Resolution No. 274 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays.

Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Domangue, Kerner, LaCombe, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, Ventrella, and Zeringue voted yea.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Jacob Landry offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Geymann, Braud, Carrier, Domangue, Kerner, LaCombe, Jacob Landry, McCormick, Orgeron, Ventrella, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Date adopted: