

Tuesday, March 12, 2013
9:20 AM

1 MS. KURZ:

2 Is there anyone else wishing to
3 make a comment during this portion of
4 tonight's meeting?

5 As a reminder, each month CPRA
6 meeting has a dedicated comment period
7 for Oil Spill, Natural Resources
8 Damages Assessment, and the Restore
9 Act. If you do not comment tonight or
10 if you commented tonight and have
11 additional comments in the future,
12 please consider attending one of our
13 monthly meetings. The next three
14 meeting dates are listed on the slide,
15 and additional meeting dates can be
16 found on our website.

17 At this time, we'll begin the third
18 and final presentation of the evening.
19 I'd like to introduce Ms. Teresa
20 Christopher, Senior Advisor for Gulf
21 Restoration for the U.S. Department of
22 Commerce. Ms. Christopher will be
23 giving a presentation on the Gulf Coast
24 Ecosystem and Restoration Council
25 progress.

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1 (PRESENTATION NO. 3)

2 MS. TERESA CHRISTOPHER:

3 Thanks, Jenny. Thank you,
4 everyone, for having us here tonight.
5 So before I start, I'd just like my
6 other council members and
7 representatives to sort of raise their
8 hand and introduce themselves as well.

9 DON JODREY:

10 I'm Don Jodrey. I'm with the
11 Department of Interior. I'm Senior
12 Advisor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
13 Department In Washington, D.C.

14 MR. BRITT PAUL:

15 I'm Britt Paul. I'm the Acting
16 State Conservation for NRCS here in
17 Louisiana.

18 MR. DRUE BANTA:

19 Hi, I'm Drue Banta. I'm with
20 Governor Jindal's office. I work for
21 Garrett Graves. I will be sitting up
22 there during the public comment period
23 for the session tonight.

24 Unfortunately, Garrett could not be
25 here tonight, but I'll be sitting in

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1 for comments.

2 MS. CHRISTOPHER:

3 Thank you. I'm Teresa Christopher.
4 I am Senior Advisor to the Secretary of
5 Commerce for Gulf Restoration. And I'm
6 so happy to be here with you tonight.
7 I'm going to keep this brief because we
8 really are here to hear what you have
9 to say. But we do want to just start
10 with some foundation.

11 So with that said, the Council
12 recognizes this is really a unique
13 opportunity to focus on Gulf-wide
14 restoration. With that said, you heard
15 Kyle speak about these other
16 initiatives that are happening, and
17 we're really trying to coordinate
18 across the board. So that at the end
19 of the day, we have what I think
20 everybody hopes to get is a successful
21 impact for Gulf-wide restoration.

22 So with that said, again we're here
23 this evening because we want to make
24 sure we're getting the best ideas from
25 the region and bringing them into the

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1 plan. I hope that many of you will
2 offer comments. I know I've heard some
3 comments already tonight already. But
4 I hope that if you don't offer comments
5 tonight, you do offer comments in the
6 future through other avenues such as
7 the website or our email address.

8 And with that said, I also want to
9 say that I understand some of you have
10 questions about the treasury
11 regulations. We're not going to touch
12 on the treasury regulations tonight.
13 They are still in draft. But there
14 will be a formal public comment once
15 the draft regulations come out.

16 So with that said, I'm going to
17 touch a little bit on the Restore Act
18 itself, a little bit on the Council,
19 talk about the allocation of funds,
20 just go through it because I know it
21 can be confusing sometimes, and talk a
22 little bit about our timeline for
23 development of this plan.

24 So first off, the Restore Act
25 dedicates 80 percent of the Clean Water

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1 Act civil penalties from the Deepwater
2 Horizon oil spill to the Gulf
3 Restoration Trust Fund. Twenty percent
4 of those penalties go into the Oil
5 Spill Liability Trust Fund, which is
6 where they normally go. But the
7 Restore Act takes 80 percent of those
8 funds and puts them back in this
9 region.

10 There are still a lot of
11 uncertainty that exist around the
12 ultimate amount the funds and the
13 timing of the funds. But with that
14 said, we do know, and it was approved
15 today as Kyle mentioned earlier, there
16 was the civil penalties settlement with
17 Transocean. So that was approved. The
18 earliest that we'll see funds now in
19 that trust fund is the end of April.
20 But we do have some insight of when
21 we'll see the initial amount of funds.
22 With that said, the U.S. continues to
23 seek additional civil penalties from BP
24 and Anadarko and will continue to
25 pursue those.

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1 The Restore Act also establishes
2 the Gulf Restoration Council. It
3 builds on the work of Gulf Restoration
4 Task Force, which I think you all
5 interacted with over the past few
6 years. It's comprised of six federal
7 members: Agriculture, Department of
8 Commerce, the Environmental Protection
9 Agency, Department of Interior,
10 Homeland and Homeland Security, usually
11 represented by the Coast Guard, as well
12 as the five Gulf states, particularly
13 the governors. So this is at the
14 secretary level and the governor level.

15 The Department of Commerce was
16 selected the Chair in mid October.
17 However, while the Council is chaired
18 by a federal agency, the states are
19 very important to the decision making
20 process in that any decision made by
21 the Council needs the majority of the
22 state votes and the chair.

23 The Council's primarily focused on
24 developing a comprehensive plan,
25 updating every five years, preparing

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1 an integrated financial plan and
2 recommendations for coordinated budget
3 requests, and submitting an annual
4 report to Congress. While it's not
5 part of our mandate with the statute,
6 we really are also focused on
7 coordinating with those other large
8 restoration initiatives, such as
9 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
10 and the money they're getting as well
11 as NRDA.

12 So some people like a pie chart.
13 Some people like a flow chart. I'll
14 switch to the other one. This is how
15 the money that goes into the trust fund
16 will be allocated. Thirty-five percent
17 will be equally divided among the five
18 states for ecological restoration,
19 economic development and tourism
20 promotion; 30 percent, I would say
21 plus interest, will be managed by the
22 Council for ecosystem restoration under
23 a comprehensive plan; 30 percent will
24 be divided among the states according
25 to the formula that's in the statute.

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1 And that will be according to state
2 expenditures plans.

3 Now, while the states develop those
4 state expenditure plans, the Council
5 does have to approve those plans, and
6 they do have to be consistent with this
7 comprehensive plan. The remaining 5
8 percent is divided up 2.5 percent and
9 2.5 percent. One-half of that goes at
10 Centers of Excellence, and the other
11 2.5 percent goes to NOAA for a science
12 and observation monitoring program.
13 That science and observation monitoring
14 program was due to have a draft out
15 January 2. It did. So you can access
16 that. It's available on the NOAA
17 website. Also, there's a person in the
18 room. I'm looking for him right now.
19 Raise your hand. There you go. If you
20 have any additional questions on the
21 science and observation program, please
22 feel free to stop by and ask
23 afterwards.

24 So again, I emphasize we don't know
25 how much the total amount will be or

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1 the timing of that money, the Council
2 has deadlines in the statute. So we
3 are moving forward with development as
4 planned, and we really want your input.

5 So with that said, as we're moving
6 forward, the Council put out in January
7 what we're calling "the Path Forward to
8 Restoring the Gulf." It's our initial
9 step in developing this comprehensive
10 plan. The document reflects the
11 initial deliberations of the Council.
12 What it doesn't do is it doesn't
13 specify projects or programs that will
14 potentially be included in the initial
15 comprehensive plan.

16 However, what it does do is it
17 incorporates the findings and
18 recommendations of the Gulf Task Force,
19 all of which have been had heavily
20 public input into it. It describes how
21 the Council of (inaudible) work,
22 describes the Council's path that
23 collaboratively developing an initial
24 comprehensive plan.

25 It identified five goals. These

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1 goals will be used to provide the
2 overarching framework for an integrated
3 approach to Gulf restoration, and it
4 fulfills the statute requirement for
5 this proposed comprehensive plan. So
6 those five goals. The initial
7 comprehensive plan aims to provide an
8 integrated approach. It does this by
9 setting out high-level guidance focused
10 on restoration and the natural
11 resources. And to provide this
12 guidance, the Council has adopted these
13 five goals.

14 The first four are the goals that
15 were identified in the task force
16 strategy. In addition to those four
17 goals, the Council felt strongly that
18 it needed to add a fifth goal, restore
19 and vitalize the Gulf economy. This
20 fifth goal really focuses on reviving
21 and supporting a sustainable Gulf
22 economy to ensure that those
23 expenditures by the state's authorized
24 under the Act in the first bucket and
25 the third bucket are consistent in the

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1 overall context of Gulf restoration.
2 So together these goals will provide
3 the overarching framework for the plan.

4 With that said, the statute still
5 required that the plan includes
6 specific things. The plan has to
7 include provisions to incorporate task
8 force strategy. It starts to do so
9 with those four goals by incorporating
10 the four rules. These include a list
11 of projects and programs authorized
12 prior to enactment of the statute but
13 not yet done. It needs to include a
14 description of how the funds will be
15 allocated over the next ten years, and
16 a list of a three-year project list
17 that prioritize based on criteria in
18 the statute. Now, those criteria you
19 can find them. There's four sets of
20 criterial. They are still very broad,
21 but there are criteria.

22 A little bit about our timeline yet
23 to have this comprehensive plan. So we
24 wanted to start with early public
25 engagement. We feel it's very

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1 important to have the best ideas come
2 from the people who live and work in
3 the region. And so this month and next
4 month we're going to be having similar
5 meetings throughout the region to get
6 those best ideas to start developing a
7 draft plan.

8 With that said, we're hoping to
9 have a draft plan released in the
10 spring for a formal public 30-day
11 public comment period. With that 30-
12 day public comment period, we'll come
13 back. We will come back and hear more
14 ideas once you actually get to see a
15 draft plan. Hopefully, it will reflect
16 a lot of the ideas we hear today.

17 Again, tonight is just one of the
18 many opportunities that we plan to
19 receive public comment. I will flash
20 up the website and email address at the
21 end as well. Please feel free to
22 submit comments throughout this
23 process. Our target is to have final
24 initial plan by beginning of July, July
25 6.

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1 With that said, we really want to
2 hear from you today. While we want to
3 hear general ideas, there are a few
4 areas we specifically would love your
5 input on: what long-term outcomes you
6 will receive from the work of the
7 Council, the types of projects the
8 Council should consider, and the best
9 ways the Council can engage you and
10 continue to engage you.

11 So with that said, these are the
12 folks that you just met. I'm going to
13 invite them to come up here with me.
14 And we look forward to hearing your
15 ideas. If you don't feel like coming
16 up to the microphone, we'll also be
17 around afterwards if you just want to
18 speak to us.

19 So thank you again for having us.

20 (PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PRESENTATION NO. 3)

21 MS. KURZ:

22 At this time, we'll begin the final
23 comment period of the evening on the
24 efforts of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem
25 Restoration Council.

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1 I'd like to reintroduce our panel
2 members. You just heard from Ms.
3 Teresa Christopher with the U.S.
4 Department of Commerce. We have Ms.
5 Drue Banta, Counsel for Office of the
6 Governor, Coastal Activities, Mr. Don
7 Jodrey, Senior Advisor to the Assistant
8 Secretary of the U.S. Department of the
9 Interior, and Mr. Britt Paul, Acting
10 State Conservationist, U.S. Department
11 of Agriculture.

12 We have quite a few people signed
13 up to comment during this portion. As
14 a reminder, please limit your comment
15 to there minutes. I'll have Karim here
16 to help you to achieve that goal.

17 The first commentor is Ms. Rebecca
18 Templeton.

19 MS. REBECCA TEMPLETON:

20 Good evening. My name is Rebecca
21 Templeton. I'm the Executive Director
22 for Bayou Grace Community Services in
23 Lower Terrebonne Parish. Thank you the
24 opportunity to speak to you tonight.

25 While it has been a long road

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1 getting to this point and decades of
2 work lay before us, this is an exciting
3 time in the realm of Gulf Coast
4 restoration, especially here in
5 Louisiana. While we have a long way to
6 go, we are seeing improvements in the
7 efforts made by the local, state, and
8 federal agencies to engage local
9 communities in the formation of their
10 plans.

11 We are excited about the future.
12 We remain hopeful that we will begin to
13 see dollars flowing sooner rather than
14 later through Restore and other
15 channels. And while we are eager to
16 get moving with projects rather than
17 plans, we recognize that the members of
18 this Council have one important plan on
19 their minds, the pending draft of the
20 proposed comprehensive restoration
21 plan.

22 As you begin this process, we urge
23 the Council to honor the commitment
24 made and the path forward to work in
25 collaboration with the people who live

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1 and work in the Gulf Coast region. As
2 you can see from the overwhelming
3 public participation with the Gulf
4 Coast Ecosystem Restoration Working
5 Group to the public sessions held by
6 Ray Mabus to the Gulf Coast Ecosystem
7 Task Force activities to your initial
8 meeting in Mobile in December, it is
9 clear that the people of the Gulf Coast
10 understand the critical nature of your
11 work and want to be involved.

12 We urge the Council to ensure that
13 these voices are given ongoing input,
14 especially the voices of the often
15 overlooked, socially, and economically
16 vulnerable populations, those who have
17 suffered the most as a result of the
18 ecosystem loss and degradation causes
19 by manmade and natural disasters.

20 We feel the creation of a citizens
21 advisory council would be one critical
22 tool to ensuring these voices are heard
23 moving forward. A citizens advisory
24 council can also help ensure that the
25 projects are prioritized, not only to

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1 restore critical coastal habitat, but
2 in doing so help promote livelihoods,
3 especially within the seafood and
4 fishing industry and help reduce risks
5 to our most socially and economically
6 vulnerable population from future
7 storms, land loss, and flooding.

8 Thank you for also recognizing that
9 ecosystem restoration is inextricably
10 linked to economic growth and
11 development. We know that numerous
12 jobs and meaningful economic
13 development opportunities are created
14 by coastal restoration and protection
15 projects. It is our hope that the Gulf
16 Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council can
17 work together through business leaders,
18 workforce development, and community
19 stakeholders, to start to train local,
20 low-income, and disadvantaged workers
21 for these jobs.

22 We are excited to see that today
23 over 120 business leaders from some of
24 the regions biggest construction and
25 engineering firms declared their

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1 willingness to do just that. And they
2 are willing to partner with the state
3 to identify the necessary skill sets
4 and training programs to prepare our
5 state's workforce to conduct future
6 restoration projects and find new
7 economic opportunities. Thank you
8 again for this opportunity.

9 MS. KURZ:

10 Dr. Marco Cocito-Monoc.

11 DR. MARCO COCITO-MONOC:

12 My complements to you on a
13 difficult name to pronounce. Marco
14 Cocito-Monoc here with the Greater New
15 Orleans Foundation.

16 Since the spill occurred in 2010,
17 we've invested about \$10 million to
18 raise money, none of which by the way
19 we received from BP. This money came
20 from all over the world, literally.
21 And I would encourage that the Council
22 would consider the long-term needs that
23 may arise from this incident and really
24 still hasn't manifested itself. There
25 are many things we don't know about

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1 this. So I would encourage you to look
2 into that.

3 In looking over the slideshow
4 tonight, you talked about the fourth
5 overarching goal being to enhance
6 community resilience, which is a very
7 important thing, the ability of
8 communities to react to similar future
9 events. But again, I would urge you.
10 We funded local organizations like
11 Catholic charities in Houma/Thibodaux,
12 for example, through a number of
13 conduits. And we've noticed that the
14 needs continued. There's enormous
15 needs out there.

16 So please keep that in mind as you
17 make your decisions about how to
18 dispense these resources. Thanks so
19 much.

20 MS. KURZ:

21 Thank you. Mr. Donald Bogan.

22 MR. DONALD BOGEN:

23 Donald Bogen, Community Organizer
24 for Bisco. I also want to agree with
25 the past comments that I think the way

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1 that the Council can best serve the
2 community by allowing community
3 participation. I think formation of a
4 community advisory council or committee
5 would be helpful.

6 Over the last past years, our
7 community has been affected by natural
8 disasters and manmade disasters, which
9 have left a lot of our citizens feeling
10 helpless. This would give us an
11 opportunity to participate in the
12 projects and give us some control over
13 our environment again. Thank you.

14 MS. KURZ:

15 Mr. Nick Matherne.

16 MR. NICK MATHERNE:

17 Nick Matherne, Director of Coastal
18 Restoration for Terrebonne Parish
19 Government. The 2012 Louisiana Coastal
20 Master Plan was a great plan including
21 many great projects. However, in
22 Terrebonne, specifically, much like
23 every other community in coastal
24 Louisiana, there were plenty of very
25 important projects to the local

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1 communities that were left out of that
2 plan for obvious reasons. We
3 understand that the plan couldn't
4 include everything.

5 However, there is a provision in
6 the Restore Act where local political
7 subdivisions will receive a portion of
8 the funding that comes directly to the
9 states. So while I know we're looking
10 for specific goals to include in this
11 plan, from a local perspective, I would
12 encourage the plan to be specific as to
13 types of uses that we can use this
14 money for but be broad enough to allow
15 the local communities the freedom to
16 accomplish the projects that we feel
17 are important and allow the state to
18 handle all the projects in the Master
19 Plan that they direct allocations.

20 So that would be the comment from
21 the locals. To leave the language
22 broad enough to give us the freedom to
23 take care of the problems that are
24 important to us here locally.

25 MR. KURZ:

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1 Mr. Scott Porter.

2 MR. SCOTT PORTER:

3 Thank you again for your time. I
4 appreciate the work you guys are doing.
5 You know, I hate to come up here and
6 gripe and say what we're not doing,
7 what doesn't get done. So with that
8 said, I'd like to say that we do have
9 things that we can do to look for the
10 oil and the problems we are having and
11 to look into research. I think if we
12 look forward and bring in other
13 independent researchers and you pile
14 all of the research together, we can
15 get a big picture.

16 Right now, we are not getting the
17 bigger picture. NRDA doesn't tell us
18 where they are taking samples from and
19 what they're finding in their samples.
20 I personally am finding out from the
21 inside because they're telling me
22 because they're worried about what
23 they're not finding. So I think if we
24 bring in independent researchers and do
25 offshore analysis on the reefs, and

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1 analysis from the inshore reefs, we can
2 screen for hydrocarbons and determine
3 what we're re-inoculating our organisms
4 with.

5 With that said, I appreciate the
6 time that you guys have spent here and
7 thank y'all for coming out.

8 MS. KURZ:

9 Mr. David Gauthé.

10 MR. DAVID GAUTHE:

11 Thank you again for allowing us to
12 talk to you. David Gauthé with Bisco,
13 Lafourche, Terrebonne, and parts of
14 Terrebonne Parish. Is there some way I
15 can get the slide to go back one?

16 On the long-term, you know, we work
17 real hard trying to ensure certain
18 things for the community that we
19 represent all over the Gulf Coast. And
20 one of the things we work toward is
21 local hire. We pass legislations by
22 the Governor to try and ensure that
23 local people are hired first.
24 Unfortunately, the workforce
25 development office only has ten days

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1 after a bid is received to fulfill that
2 obligation. That's not all of time.
3 And it's hard to keep everybody ready
4 to go out at the same time when you
5 don't know when the money is coming
6 down.

7 So I'd like to ask the Council to
8 propose something that when a
9 contractor bid or proposal goes out,
10 part of the score of that particular
11 thing is based on the amount of local
12 people they plan on hiring. That would
13 kind of help ensure that we get out
14 point across.

15 A second issue has been hit several
16 times is the citizens advisory board.
17 I know y'all work is doing what you do
18 tonight to get the public involved.
19 But I think it would be much better if
20 we had people on the advisory committee
21 or board that would be able to sit
22 down. Science sometimes doesn't
23 understand community. But community a
24 lot of times don't understand science.
25 And at this kind of participation could

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1 allow certain people to be able to go
2 back and say, hey, this is what they're
3 trying to accomplish. I think that
4 would be a great effort.

5 I'd like to say one other thing
6 too. I've mentioned this a couple of
7 times, and then I'll sit down after.
8 Looking for something that the local
9 people can really see, feel, taste, is
10 perhaps a reduction in something. And
11 I'm talking about insurance premiums.
12 I'd love to live long enough for the
13 insurance companies to write me a
14 letter and say, based on the stuff that
15 y'all are doing to protect yourselves
16 along the coast, we're going to reduce
17 your insurance coverage. I hope that
18 happens one day.

19 But I'm also asking the Council to
20 work real close and hard with the
21 insurance commissioner and the states
22 that we work with to make sure they are
23 in discussions. And if there's a
24 reduction in risk because of some of
25 the things we're doing, that should

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1 offset the amount that they are
2 increasing our premiums based on future
3 risks that the insurance company thinks
4 they're going to be absorbing. Thank
5 you.

6 MS. KURZ:

7 Thank you. Mr. Doug Meffert.

8 MR. DOUG MEFFERT:

9 Good evening. I'm Doug Meffert
10 with the National Audubon Society and
11 the Executive Director of the Louisiana
12 State Office. I also want to thank you
13 for the presentation, Ms. Christopher,
14 and for all of your work in this
15 unprecedented and really challenging
16 experience but one that will,
17 hopefully, have an opportunity for our
18 communities and our coast.

19 The only chance we have at really
20 rebuilding our coast is through
21 holistic coastwide ecosystem
22 restoration. And we hope that through
23 the process of developing the
24 comprehensive plan, the council should
25 be clear that ecosystem restoration is

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1 the top priority for the Gulf.

2 We heard about the State Master
3 Plan earlier. And the State's Master
4 Plan is taking a bold yet realistic
5 approach along these lines. And
6 Audubon supports the BP settlement
7 dollars along with WRDA dollars to go
8 towards the Master Plan. Kyle had
9 mentioned NRDA and its implication on
10 bird impacts. Being Audubon, we talk
11 about birds. So we all remember the
12 horrific images of birds that were
13 oiled in the BP spill. These were
14 among the most damaged wildlife. They
15 became a symbol of the damage but also
16 the resilience of the coast.

17 And this as Marco said, it may take
18 decades to fully realize the impacts of
19 these species. But at Audubon, we
20 recognize the importance of bird
21 habitat protection and restoration as a
22 critical component of Louisiana's
23 overall ecosystem resilience and
24 sustainability.

25 So moving forward with Audubon,

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1 we'd like a balanced approach looking
2 at long-term freshwater diversions when
3 relevant for here the introduction of
4 the Atchafalaya River water into upper
5 Terrebonne Parish, but also providing
6 the near-term habitat protection for
7 shore and barrier island restoration.
8 Thank you very much.

9 MS. KURZ:

10 Mr. Kerry St. Pe':

11 MR. KERRY ST. PE':

12 Kerry St. Pe'. I represent
13 Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary
14 Program. I see Karim here is still
15 here. I can't say Barataria Terrebonne
16 in three minutes. My estuary program
17 is one of 28 of the surround country.
18 We all are focused on now implementing
19 (inaudible), which was formulated over
20 a five-year period using
21 representatives, most of the people in
22 this room participated in a development
23 of our plan.

24 We don't have a lot of funds. We
25 aren't funded so that we get, for

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1 instance, restore our barrier island.
2 Half of our funds come from EPA through
3 Section 320 of the Clean Water Act.
4 And we have to match that with some
5 state funds. We can't quite make our
6 federal match with the state funds we
7 get we've cut over the last six years.

8 The point I'm making is that you
9 need to engage with especially the
10 seven national estuary programs along
11 the Gulf of Mexico. All of us have
12 plans. All of us have projects that we
13 need to be implemented that were vetted
14 through our management conferences.
15 They all have an agreement with all
16 federal agencies, state agencies, local
17 citizens, scientists. These are the
18 projects that can be implemented with
19 almost no political backlash.

20 Since 2000, we were -- what I want
21 to say is that although we can't these
22 fund projects directly, many of these
23 projects, these larger projects, we get
24 them constructed by taking advantage of
25 such opportunities as you guys are

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1 offering right now. That's what we
2 come to you with.

3 Since 2000, we were engaged in bird
4 surveys. We were following the birds,
5 the nesting areas. And the oil
6 definitely impacted four islands in the
7 Barataria system tremendously. These
8 islands went from 409 acres in size,
9 collectively, to 15 acres today in
10 2008. They are much smaller now.

11 We are involved with Plaquemines
12 Parish. Plaquemines Parish has \$1.2
13 million to reconstruct those islands.
14 We have managed to raise a million
15 dollars from Shell Oil Company.
16 They've given us \$1 million. The
17 American Bird Conservatives have given
18 us money and Apache has given us money.

19 The point is we don't have enough
20 money to rebuild these islands. These
21 islands are widely important for the
22 birds because they are small. The
23 birds seek these islands because
24 there's no predators on them. The oil
25 impacted Black Mangroves on those

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1 islands, Black Mangroves are
2 particularly susceptible to oiling.
3 They are killed instantly by oil. So
4 consequently, there's nothing to hold
5 these small islands together anymore.
6 One of them is totally gone. These
7 islands are very, very small, much
8 smaller than the few acres that I've
9 said earlier.

10 So we would like to see, joining
11 with Plaquemines Parish, we know that
12 restoring two of those islands is a
13 cost of around \$12 million. We don't
14 have \$12 million. But the Restore Act,
15 particularly what's going to the
16 federal agencies, that portion of money
17 is what we would like to see spent on
18 these smaller islands. Thank you.

19 MS. KURZ:

20 Mr. Stephen Peyronnin.

21 MR. STEVEN PEYRONNIN:

22 My name is Steven Peyronnin. I'm
23 the Executive Director of the Coalition
24 to Restore Coastal Louisiana. And for
25 the past 25 years our organization has

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1 brought together a very diverse
2 interest groups along the coast under
3 the sole umbrella of protecting and
4 restoring a sustainable coast of
5 Louisiana. So it's on behalf of our
6 board of directors, our members, and
7 our supporters that I'm here to offer
8 you very brief thoughts as you begin to
9 formulate a comprehensive plan.

10 We'll be submitting more robust
11 written comments because this is an
12 incredibly complex problem and an
13 incredibly complex system. But just in
14 general, I hope you walk away tonight
15 with an idea towards evaluating a plan
16 based on the four criteria. When you
17 hear a lot of comments here tonight,
18 you hopefully appreciate the fact that
19 the underlying problem with coastal
20 communities, for our coastal economies,
21 our coastal culture, is coastal land
22 loss. That is the number one priority
23 that should advance the comprehensive
24 planning process.

25 The second element is that our

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1 coastal land loss is occurring at such
2 a scale where we can't possibly hope to
3 solve it with small piecemeal projects.
4 We have to think in scale. When you
5 consider that coastal Louisiana
6 comprises 40 percent of the coastal
7 wetlands in the 48 states, yet accounts
8 for 80 percent of coastal wetlands
9 lost, you start to really appreciate
10 the severity of the problem.
11 Hopefully, then you start to appreciate
12 the magnitude of the solution and the
13 tools that we have at our disposal: the
14 magnificence of the Mississippi River,
15 the Atchafalaya Basin. We have to
16 think in scale when we look at these
17 pictures when we try and solve its
18 problems.

19 The third element I want you to
20 think about is that the state has
21 already taken on many of these
22 challenges. Over the past two years
23 it's worked diligently to engage
24 thousands of individuals, undergone
25 rigorous scientific analysis and

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1 modeling to come up with consensus
2 driven plans unanimously adopted by the
3 State Legislature. It recognizes
4 beyond limited time, limited resources,
5 and natural resources to solve this
6 problem. I strongly urge you when
7 you're looking in Louisiana to adopt
8 projects and program that are
9 consistent with the State's Master
10 Plan.

11 The final point I'll leave you with
12 is urgency. I think in the path
13 forward you've done a excellent job of
14 recounting the various efforts over the
15 past four years from EPA Task Force,
16 the CEQ Interagency Working Group,
17 which might want to add to the topic as
18 well, the Mabus Report, Presidential
19 Oil Spill Commission.

20 We congratulate you today, it's now
21 official that the Restore Council has
22 dollars from the Transocean settlement
23 finalized to begin this work. And the
24 one thing I'd ask you to do is embrace
25 a sense of urgency.

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1 To recap, we're looking at place
2 restoration first. Ask yourself that
3 question when you are looking at
4 projects. The scale that we need has
5 to be large. The State Master Plan can
6 guide your efforts. You have the
7 resources. So thank you very much.

8 MS. KURZ:

9 Mr. David Muth.

10 MR. DAVID MUTH:

11 Good evening. Thank you all for
12 coming and listening. My name is David
13 Muth. I'm the Program director for
14 Mississippi River Delta Restoration for
15 the National Wildlife Federation. I'm
16 going to make very brief remarks and
17 kind of look at the questions that you
18 all want our ideas on.

19 What is the long-term outcome that
20 we want to see? What we'd like to see
21 is the Council put in place a process
22 that would allow us to change the
23 trajectory for the Gulf of Mexico from
24 ecosystem decline to improvement. And
25 what that means for the most part here

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1 in Louisiana is for the Council to work
2 with the State to implement those
3 projects in the Master Plan to
4 accomplish that. Specifically, the
5 Mississippi River Delta restoration
6 through putting the river back into the
7 Delta through sediment diversions that
8 begin building land and reversing land
9 loss. And we look forward to vigorous
10 future public participation, an open
11 process in project selection, and
12 funding throughout the Gulf.

13 But let's not reinvent the wheel.
14 The work has been done as it has been
15 on the State Master Plan. Thank you
16 very much.

17 MS. KURZ:

18 Is there anyone else wishing to
19 provide comments to the representatives
20 of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration
21 Council? Please state your name and
22 affiliation.

23 MR. RANDY MOERTLE:

24 My name is Randy Moertle. I'm with
25 Little Lake Land Company and General

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1 Agricultural Services, and private
2 landowner.

3 I'll address all three of these
4 very quickly. Long-term outcome you'd
5 like to see from the work of the
6 council. We have a program in place
7 already. It's called CWPPRA, which
8 Britt serves on the technical task
9 force or technical work group. That
10 program right now is going on its 23rd
11 year. It has most of the projects the
12 state has on the ground is running out
13 of money. Right now, there's talk
14 about operation monitoring and
15 maintenance problems, issues, and
16 everything else. They're talking about
17 decommissioning projects that are
18 reaching their 20-year life.

19 What I'd like to see this Council
20 consider is let's inject more money
21 into an existing program that everybody
22 is used to. You want public
23 participation, this is something that
24 everybody is already completely
25 injected into. And this thing could

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1 use some more money. The problem is
2 we're getting anywhere from 60 to 100
3 projects nominated every year. And
4 then we end up fighting all the way
5 down from 20 to 10. We get down to 4.
6 And then they fund maybe 1 or 2 for
7 construction. It has no money.

8 This is the program that will
9 really work. So if we want to talk
10 about types of projects, they come out
11 of the CWPPRA program. We talk about
12 public participation. It comes out the
13 CWPPRA program. We talk about long-
14 term outcome. Let's get some dedicated
15 funding at a level that we can actually
16 get some coastal restoration done
17 around here. Thank you very much.

18 MR. STEVE COCHRAN:

19 My name is Steve Cochran. I'm the
20 Director of the Mississippi River Delta
21 Program for the Environmental Defense
22 Fund. We were very engaged in working
23 on the legislation, and it's actually
24 quite excited to see you guys here to
25 be here and knowing that we have the

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1 opportunity to pursue this thing that
2 people have been dreaming about down
3 here for a long time.

4 There's a couple points that I want
5 to make. One is that you guys in
6 particular know that so many problems
7 that are brought to you in government
8 are problems often without a solution
9 or much of a solution. And in this
10 case, there's this unusual circumstance
11 where, not only is there a plan in
12 place as you heard talked about, the
13 Master Plan, but there's also this
14 natural system in place that we can
15 actually use to help restore the coast.
16 Too often restoration requires all
17 kinds of interventions and processes.

18 Now, we are late in the process
19 where intervention is necessary, but we
20 can actually usual the natural systems
21 to do that by restoring some of the
22 systems that were in place.

23 So as you look at the opportunities
24 before you, looking at the opportunity
25 to use these natural systems in the way

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1 that they use to actually populate is
2 something that I would encourage you to
3 do.

4 The last part that I would say is
5 the sense of urgency, which you will
6 hear as you go all across the coast, no
7 matter how often you hear this in
8 Louisiana or other states. I would ask
9 you to think about the need,
10 particularly in this place, to come up
11 with solutions within the time that we
12 have, within the time that we have.

13 There are lots of choices that you
14 guys are going to have to make. But
15 when you're here, when you see the
16 coast disappearing every day, you
17 understand that time is looming.

18 So we have this wonderful
19 opportunity, this moment in time, where
20 there is a plan and there is likely to
21 be some significant resources
22 available, but we have very little time
23 to actually apply those. So that sense
24 of urgency is very real down here. I
25 urge you to take as much of that back

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1 from here as you can. Again, thank you
2 guys very much for everything you do.

3 MS. KURZ:

4 Is there anyone else who would like
5 to make a comment tonight?

6 MR. THOMAS DARDAR:

7 My name is Thomas Dardar, United
8 Houma Nation, Principal Chief. I was
9 looking at the guy with the card.
10 Maybe we should have a card the same
11 way he has, all these different
12 councils, agencies, and all these
13 different entities, that are coming
14 together. First we started out with
15 CWPPRA, NRDA. Now we got MESA Plan.
16 Now we have a comprehensive plan. So
17 we have all these different boards.
18 You asking us long-term. We've been
19 coming to meetings now for many, many
20 years. We've been telling our story,
21 telling the same thing over and over.

22 Maybe you guys need to let the left
23 hand know what the right hand is doing
24 and communicating with yourselves and
25 see what we've already said and maybe

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1 go with that.

2 And maybe we can hold the card and
3 bring it to you and say you got one
4 minute, 30 seconds, or whatever.
5 Because, you know, I understand the
6 urgency and the respect of people's
7 time here, but we need to be heard.
8 You need to understand that even though
9 you're given us three minutes, we've
10 been here a lifetime, like the
11 gentlemen said. The urgency is now.
12 We have a little bit of land.

13 Twenty years ago they did a study.
14 They came down. They come back and
15 say, let's see that the study said.
16 The land was gone. So now they have to
17 redo the study, redo and go back. Go
18 back into the same areas and realize
19 that the land is no longer there, and
20 they have to regroup.

21 So I understand the study is
22 necessary. But even when you go to
23 school, you study, you take a test
24 eventually. So the test is now. We're
25 going to do other studies. They are

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1 necessary. I understand we can't just
2 throw dirt and mud out there and expect
3 it to protect ourselves. But at the
4 same token, we don't have 50, 60 years
5 because I'm only 57 years old. They
6 got people here that used to hunt on
7 land, now we fish.

8 So if you can understand that we
9 used to farm, plant, and harvest crops,
10 and hunt. Now, we're fishing. You
11 understand the urgency and the
12 expedience that we need to attend to
13 this problem. Thank you.

14 MS. KURZ:

15 Any additional comments? Thank
16 you.

17 As a reminder, the Council will
18 continue to provide additional
19 opportunities for public engagement
20 throughout the process of developing
21 the initial comprehensive plan.

22 As additional public meetings are
23 scheduled, the meeting dates and
24 locations will be made available on
25 restorethegulf.gov. In addition to

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1 making verbal comments tonight, you can
2 also submit written comments to
3 restorecouncil@dot.gov.

4 Before concluding tonight's meeting
5 I'd like to offer you two quick
6 reminders. If you have friends,
7 families, or colleagues interested in
8 attending one of these public meetings,
9 we're holding another public meeting
10 tomorrow in New Orleans at UNO Homer
11 Hitt Alumni Center and on Thursday, at
12 the Lake Charles Civic Center.

13 Our information stations around the
14 room will remain open if you have any
15 questions about anything you heard at
16 tonight's meeting.

17 With that, I'll conclude our
18 meeting. On behalf of the CPRA and our
19 federal partners, I'd like to thank you
20 for joining us tonight. Have a great
21 evening.

22 **(MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:44 P.M.)**

23

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