



State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR

February 8, 2023

Senator Bill Cassidy
United States Senate
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senators Cassidy and Whitehouse,

As Chairman of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Board, I am pleased to learn of your plan to reintroduce the Reinvesting in America's Shoreline Economies & Ecosystems (RISEE) Act in the 118th Congress. This bill is of significant importance to the immediate and long-term success of Louisiana's coastal program, and the CPRA Board supports your efforts to achieve enactment of this legislation.

Since the 1930s, Louisiana has lost around 2,000 square miles of coastal wetlands, which has also increased hurricane vulnerability for coastal communities, infrastructure, and industrial facilities and activities. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the CPRA was formed to develop and implement a comprehensive coastal protection and restoration master plan that integrates management of hurricane risk and the ongoing land loss problem. The coastal master plan is both a strategic plan and an implementation plan driving investments every year that can reduce flood risk and restore coastal ecosystems. Guided by broad public input and world-class science, the coastal master plan will guide investments that will benefit hundreds of thousands of coastal residents that live in disadvantaged communities, according the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Environmental and Economic Justice Screening Tool per President Biden's Justice40 Initiative.

The CPRA has been leading the charge to conserve and rebuild Louisiana's coastal habitats and protect its coastal communities from storms and rising seas. In state fiscal year 2024, the CPRA proposes to expend nearly \$1.7 billion on 118 active projects aimed at restoring or protecting our state and coast. The scale of Louisiana's coastal crisis requires sustained, growing investments. Louisiana needs more consistent yearly funding to move forward with high-value projects in the proactive manner that make Louisiana's coastal master plan the largest climate change adaptation plan currently underway in the nation.

The RISEE Act would provide a mechanism for us to do more to protect and restore coastal Louisiana, in both the short and long term. Specifically, the legislation would increase the level of impact assistance that Gulf Producing States (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama) receive under the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA), and it would create a revenue sharing structure for offshore wind development. As you may know, GOMESA is only one of two reoccurring revenue streams that the CPRA receives for coastal investment. GOMESA is crucial for the multiyear planning required for large-scale coastal protection and

restoration projects. Louisiana has constitutionally dedicated its GOMESA funds to coastal protection and restoration.

The RISEE Act would also expand coastal protection and restoration funding in the long-term through revenue sharing from future offshore wind development. As the global energy economy transitions to reduce GHG emissions and avoid catastrophic climate change, funding for the coastal master plan must be diversified. The Department of Interior intends to conduct its first offshore wind lease sale in 2023, which could lead to valuable bids given the substantial commercial interest. Revenue sharing is necessary to bolster the natural resources that support that production.

Now more than ever, Louisiana is at a critical point in reinvesting in communities and in our coast. Achieving resilience for our people and unique coastal habitats requires resources. I applaud your leadership for putting this legislation forward that allows us to do just that, and you have our full support in moving this endeavor forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chip Kline", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Kyle R. "Chip" Kline, Jr.
Chairman

Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board