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February 6, 2022

The Honorable  
Bill Cassidy  
United States Senate  
520 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cassidy:

On behalf of the Greater Lafourche Port Commission, I wanted to express our strong support and appreciation for your continued efforts and those of our Louisiana Congressional Delegation in addressing Louisiana coastal restoration issues, including seeking an equitable increase of GOMESA revenues for Louisiana and adjacent Gulf states.

As you know, Port Fourchon and numerous communities throughout the Louisiana Gulf Coast live at the epicenter of the coastal issues that your legislative efforts seek to address. Our “working coast” supports many thousands of jobs and contributes substantially to the revenues of local, state, and federal governments through the energy activity located alongside and on the Outer Continental Shelf, in addition to the commercial and recreational fishing and other tourism activities as well. At the same time, our communities increasingly face disaster from coastal land loss. We need only to look at the storm season in 2020 and 2021, and the monetary damages and interruption of economic activities that were caused by the series of storms, some of which were relatively minor, as examples of why Louisiana’s coastal restoration efforts are imperative.

As you know, GOMESA funding is the primary source of revenue for Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan. The Master Plan is administered by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, largely with GOMESA funding. However, every community in coastal Louisiana is a partner with CPRA in a variety of restoration activities. This includes the contribution by local governments, NGOs and private sector businesses providing funding and in-kind contributions to coastal restoration activities. For instance, Port Fourchon recently received Congressional authorization for the Corps of Engineers to dredge the federal channels at our Port, to accommodate the offshore service vessels utilizing our Port. In planning this project, Port Fourchon worked closely with CPRA, federal and state resource agencies, and NGO’s in developing a dredge material disposal plan to utilize the dredge material for beneficial use disposal. 100% of the dredge material generated from our project will be utilized for coastal restoration projects in the Coastal Master Plan. While the use of our dredge material is significant in providing benefits to our immediate area, it is only one piece of a patchwork of proposed projects throughout coastal Louisiana that are included in or consistent with the Coastal Master Plan. The linchpin for all of this activity

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is GOMESA funding, which not only provides direct funding for these activities, but also induces significant local contributions for coastal restoration. While the current level of GOMESA funding was hard-earned by the Louisiana Congressional Delegation over many years, there still remains a disparity in revenues derived from energy activities on federal lands as between on-shore and off-shore development. Louisiana has been disadvantaged by this disparity, and thus your legislative efforts are both timely and even more critical.

Finally, you know very well the significance of offshore energy development to our local, state and national economies. But we who live along the Gulf Coast and earn our living from and build our lives around offshore energy development do not live in a vacuum. We understand the importance of focusing on climate matters, and we understand that human activities play a role in climate change. In fact, we are supportive of Renewable Energy such as Offshore Wind and are confident that Port Fourchon will service Gulf of Mexico Offshore Wind Development.

As I said earlier, one need to look only at the series of storms in 2020 and 2021 to realize our vulnerability to climate change, irrespective of the causes. But a balanced approach to developing a long-term national energy strategy that includes increases from the renewable energy sources must necessarily include the realities of our Nation's continued need for fossil fuel development, from the standpoint of industrial and consumer use of fossil fuels for the foreseeable future, and for the economic benefits that energy development provides in the form of employment and tax revenues. Moreover, as you know, the legislation enacted into law last year – the Great American Outdoors Act, provides a direct nexus of revenues from offshore energy development to increased conservation funding, via contributions to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thus, the need to maintain consistent offshore energy development of all types has increased in its importance to our Nation's economic and environmental goals.

In conclusion, the Greater Lafourche Port Commission and our surrounding community remains steadfast in our commitment to continue to work as a partner with our elected leaders at the federal, state and local levels, as well as the conservation community and private sector, to address the challenges and achieve the objectives that have been set forth to maintain our community's and Nation's economic, environmental and livability standards. We appreciate your efforts in these and other matter on behalf of Louisiana.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chett C. Chiasson'.

Chett C. Chiasson, MPA  
Executive Director

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**Greater Lafourche Port Commission**

Port Fourchon ♦ South Lafourche Leonard Miller, Jr. Airport

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