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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MEMORANDUM

TO: Team Members

FROM: Tyler Patrick Gray, Secretary

DATE: April 4, 2025

SUBJECT: Department of Energy and Natural Resources Re-Organization

Today, the final legislative instruments will be posted online, including the Department's Reorganization Bill sponsored by Senator Bob Hensgens. This publication marks a pivotal milestone in a process that has been underway for several months, culminating in the final transition over the next few weeks. As this is an evolving process, there is more to come, but I am writing to provide a brief overview of the key changes that directly affect our leadership structure and introduce a new framework for resource governance.

Our Three Pillars for Reorganization

- **Transparency:** We remain committed to open governance, with clear budget oversight and steady communication both within the agency and with stakeholders, emphasizing administrative flexibility under transparent oversight.
- **Balance:** Our new organizational framework fosters responsible resource management that supports economic growth while safeguarding the environment. As Executive Directors, you will collaborate closely across the state to implement best practices for sustainable success.
- **Solutions:** We aim to deliver practical, user-friendly tools for our staff, partner agencies, and the public. Whether by refining our permitting processes or upgrading data platforms, our focus is on meaningful solutions that drive accountability and strong outcomes.

Below is a concise legislative overview capturing the main features of the proposed reorganization legislation and related initiatives, guided by the three pillars of Transparency, Balance, and Solutions.

Three Pillars in Action

Transparency

- Clear statutory definitions of departmental roles reduce confusion about permitting, enforcement, and resource ownership. As part of this reorganization, the title of “Assistant Secretary” will be transitioned to “Executive Director,” helping to establish a more functional and transparent leadership structure. Executive Directors will serve alongside the department’s three appointed leadership positions: Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Undersecretary. This updated structure will also offer greater flexibility to the department to recruit and retain Executive Directors with the experience and expertise needed to meet today’s challenges.
- An expedited review mechanism is available to applicants, but must include robust public notice requirements and a formal, time-bound review.
- The Natural Resources Commission provides a public forum for stakeholder feedback and ensures cross-agency alignment on regulatory changes.

Balance

- Integrates conservation, energy development, and economic growth mandates under one organizational umbrella, reinforcing responsible resource extraction while protecting the environment.
- Establishes CURRENT to manage inland waters in tandem with the existing Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. This balancing act supports waterborne recreation, navigation, and flood protection in regions not covered by coastal programs.
- Requires adequate financial security for well-plugging and site cleanup, ensuring that environmental responsibilities do not fall to the public or landowners unfairly.

Solutions

- The legislation consolidates or eliminates redundancies in Title 30 and related statutes, offering unified approaches to permitting, enforcement, and remediation across all offices.
- Soap (Saltwater and Oil Assessment Process) aligns scientific rigor with practical dispute resolution, giving operators and landowners one definitive remediation plan subject to sign-off by all relevant agencies.
- Moves Louisiana away from an ad hoc array of legacy statutes toward a modernized, adaptable system, leveraging advanced technology for permitting, inspections, and compliance tracking.

Anticipated Outcomes

- A more agile and cohesive regulatory environment that responds effectively to technological shifts and national or international market conditions.
- Streamlined processes for obtaining and enforcing environmental permits, reducing bureaucratic overlaps while maintaining robust safeguards.

- Enhanced stakeholder confidence—industry, landowners, and the public—thanks to transparent dispute-resolution procedures, predictable remediation standards, and clear lines of accountability.

By adopting this legislative package, Louisiana is poised to merge longstanding conservation principles with modern best practices in resource governance, underlining the state's commitment to safeguarding natural wealth while fostering sustainable economic development.

Next Steps

- **Agency Update:** Please register for the webinar on Monday, sending questions to Ms. Ashley Garrett, at Ashley.garrett@la.gov.
- **Detailed Guidance:** In the coming weeks, we will provide more specific information about the transition, including updated organizational charts, interim procedures, and revised job descriptions.
- **Communication:** We plan to create multiple tools for feedback, including a dedicated landing page on our website to keep staff and stakeholders informed.

These changes highlight our dedication to continuous improvement, operational excellence, and the responsible stewardship of Louisiana's natural resources. By focusing on our three pillars—Transparency, Balance, and Solutions—we embed these principles in our day-to-day operations, from budget oversight to cross-agency coordination, ensuring we maintain public interest, integrity in revenue generation, and adopt modern best practices.

Sincerely,



Tyler Gray, Secretary
Louisiana Department of
Energy and Natural Resources