



# Coalition To Restore Coastal Louisiana

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CRCL Urges Legislators to Support Its 2021 Legislative Platform**

*List of Priorities Represents Thousands of Louisiana Residents From Across the State*

(Baton Rouge, LA – April 22, 2021) The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana was the first coastal advocacy organization in Louisiana, and each year, on behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, we release a legislative platform to our state lawmakers. In conjunction with the opening of the 2021 legislative session, CRCL Policy Director Emily Vuxton has released the following statement:

“This platform represents the views of our thousands of members who represent diverse backgrounds and points of view. Our members care deeply about the fragile coastal ecosystem we call home. We urge members of the Legislature to consider the following priorities that are crucial to effectively address the unprecedented challenges we face on the coast. Legislative action taken this session must be far-sighted, wise and pragmatic if we are to protect and restore the coast. We urge legislators to take the long view when voting this session.”

#### **1. Protect and Increase CPRA Funding**

This year a state surplus is expected, and we urge the Legislature to again commit some of it to the Coastal Trust Fund. CPRA continues to do an admirable job at executing projects, and yet the agency still does not have the full \$50 billion it will take to execute the Coastal Master Plan. Many critical projects are moving forward this year, and as our hurricane season nears it is crucial that CPRA is afforded the full funding necessary to execute projects as quickly as possible. We also urge the Legislature to protect the Coastal Trust Fund from any funding sweeps.

#### **2. Pass the Annual Plan (S.C.R. 9)**

CPRA continues to make strides in advancing ambitious annual plans for the Legislature to consider. This fiscal year, many of the most impactful projects for our coast will move forward, including the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion and the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp project. The annual plan reflects the hard work CPRA does in implementing ambitious projects that will protect and restore our coast. We urge you to vote YES on the annual plan.

#### **3. Support Oyster Shell Recycling (H.C.R. 26)**

CRCL has run one of the country’s largest oyster shell recycling programs for six years, recycling more than 10 million pounds of shell that would have otherwise been squandered in landfills. We believe that oyster shell is a valuable renewable resource that should be used to protect our coast and restore fisheries habitat. To that end, we support a resolution that urges and requests the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to conduct a study to determine the final destination of oyster shells removed from Louisiana waters and to recommend steps to further divert oyster shells from landfills. We urge you to vote YES on this resolution.

#### **4. Pay back the HSDRRS debt**

Language in the federal Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) signed into law at the end of 2020 authorized federal renegotiations of debt repayments for the New Orleans area Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) built by the Army Corps of Engineers in the years following Hurricane Katrina. These renegotiations

could save the state millions of dollars if the state commits to paying back the principal over the next three years. We urge the Legislature to support this payment, in order to reduce the state's total debt.

#### **5. Support funding for LDWF (H.B. 1, H.B. 515, H.B. 691)**

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has a critical mission to manage and protect our abundant natural resources. We believe that healthy commercial and recreational fisheries are a critical aspect of a thriving coast. For years, however, the department has not had the funds needed to fully meet its missions. LDWF has requested general funds to plug a shortfall in next year's agency budget (H.B. 1 and H.B. 515). We ask the Legislature to fund this request. We also ask legislators to vote YES on H.B. 691 which will give the department much needed fee increases. Additionally, we urge the Legislature to find a way for the department to be sustained going into the future as oil and gas revenues decline.

#### **About CRCL:**

The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to drive bold, science-based action to sustain a dynamic coastal Louisiana through engagement and advocacy. CRCL was founded in 1988 and was the state's first coastal restoration organization. Visit [crcl.org](http://crcl.org).

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