



Resolution to Support the Relocation of the Native American Community of Isle de Jean Charles

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Management Conference

Summary: This resolution supports the decision of the Native American Community of Isle de Jean Charles to relocate to preserve and maintain their culture, history, traditions, community, continuity, and self-identity.

WHEREAS, Louisiana's coastal deltaic plain is of tremendous economic, ecological, cultural, educational and recreational value to residents of Louisiana, the people of the United States, and the world; and

WHEREAS, all of the land between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers is in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary, deemed a region of national importance by the United States Congress and the State of Louisiana; and,

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program was signed by Governor Murphy "Mike" Foster in 1996, a culmination of five years of watershed level community-led planning, and a high level of public involvement and support; and,

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program has been under continuous implementation for the past 25 years; and,

WHEREAS, the 4.2 million acres of land in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary System is composed of various invaluable and threatened habitats that occur throughout a salinity gradient creating an estuarine continuum from the fresher northern region to the saltier southern region, including natural ridges, cypress-tupelo swamps, fresh marsh, intermediate marsh, brackish marsh, salt marsh, and barrier islands, depended upon by native peoples from prehistoric through modern times for shelter, water, fire and food; and,

WHEREAS, there is no other place on Earth disappearing as quickly as the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary System; and,

WHEREAS, some of the vital protective functions of coastal wetlands and ridges include stabilization of the coastal landscape and protection from hurricane, wind, and storm surge protection; and,

WHEREAS, the functions and ecosystem values of Louisiana's coastal wetland forests are threatened by both large- and small-scale hydrologic and geomorphic alterations that have caused the complete loss of some coastal wetlands and ridges, reduced the productivity and vigor of the remaining area, and converted these wetland areas to other uses; and,

WHEREAS, historically, the Native American Community of Isle de Jean Charles was established in the 1800s and has survived into modern times through subsistence agriculture and fishing from the bounty of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary; and,

WHEREAS, the Native American Community of Isle de Jean Charles is located in lower Terrebonne Parish in part of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary that has suffered some of the highest rates of land loss on Earth; and,

WHEREAS, the Native American Community of Isle de Jean Charles has suffered from cultural isolation; loss of traditionally and culturally important plants, animals, and landscape; loss of traditional knowledge; and loss of population; and,

WHEREAS, the Native American Community of Isle de Jean Charles is becoming more vulnerable each day to tropical storms and hurricanes, coastal land loss, subsidence and sea level rise.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Management Conference strongly supports the decision of the Native American Community of Isle de Jean Charles to physically and collectively relocate to a less vulnerable location to preserve and maintain their culture, history, traditions, community, continuity, and self-identity.

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