

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 94004
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9004
(225) 342-7015
GOV.LA.GOV

July 23, 2019

RDML Timothy Gallaudet, Ph.D, USN Ret.
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
and Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
1401 Constitution Ave. NW, Room 5128
Washington, D.C. 20230

RE: National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERRS) in the Mississippi River Delta

Dear Assistant Secretary Gallaudet:

The State of Louisiana is writing to express its interest in participating in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) as administered by your agency under the Coastal Zone Management Act. The Mississippi River Delta ecosystem is not only a vibrant part of our state's natural landscape but also underpins important economic and cultural traditions as well. Since before the oil spill, Louisiana has made tremendous investments in the restoration and protection of our coast as well as scientific investigations to support that work. These activities will accelerate in size and scope as additional, substantial *Deepwater Horizon* funds are brought to this effort over the next several years. For these reasons, Louisiana would like to nominate a site in the Delta biogeographic region for inclusion in the NERRS. Together, I hope we can create a unique estuarine research reserve that will benefit state and national research and management interests.

Alongside our request to participate in NERRS, Louisiana would also like to formally request financial assistance in order to begin the site selection process in the delta biogeographic region. To begin this process, I designate Louisiana Sea Grant as the lead agency under this program, with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) providing pass through funds and general oversight during the site selection process.

Please direct future correspondence on this program to Dr. Robert Twilley at Louisiana Sea Grant and Bren Haase at CPRA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards".

John Bel Edwards
Governor

Cc: Dr. Robert Twilley
Chip Kline
Bren Haase



13-068066
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

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The Honorable John Bel Edwards
Governor
State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Governor Edwards:

Thank you for your letter regarding the State of Louisiana's interest in establishing a National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

Per your letter, the state's unique natural coastal ecosystem – as well as important economic and cultural traditions – provides a strong basis to consider designating a reserve in the Mississippi Delta region. Furthermore, this designation would be consistent with the programmatic goal to include at least one site from each biogeographic region in the reserve system.

NOAA's National Ocean Service manages the site designation process, and the program lead is Erica Seiden. She can be reached at (240) 533-0781 or Erica.Seiden@noaa.gov. Ms. Seiden has been in contact with Dr. Robert Twilley from Louisiana State University and will coordinate next steps with the University and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, specifically as it relates to applying for financial assistance.

We look forward to providing both technical assistance and broad capabilities for the site selection process. If you have any further questions, please contact Dr. Jeff Payne, Director of the Office for Coastal Management, at (240) 533-0906 or Jeff.Payne@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

Neil A. Jacobs, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for
Environmental Observation and Prediction
Performing the Duties of
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

THE ADMINISTRATOR

