

ONE to ONE

An Update on the Efforts of the LA 1 Coalition

Summer 2002

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SPECIAL EDITION • SPECIAL EDITION • SPECIAL EDITION

A MEMBERSHIP CALL TO ACTION

U.S. Senate Committee Gives Thumbs Up to Federal Funds for Improving Existing LA 1

The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee on July 30 approved \$4.5 million in the annual federal transportation appropriations bill for projects to stabilize the existing LA Highway 1 between Golden Meadow and Grand Isle. The appropriation was announced by U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu who is a member of the committee and has long championed the contributions that LA 1 makes to the entire nation in the way of energy supply.

"Few Americans realize it, but they depend on the narrow road that is LA 1," said Sen. Landrieu. "It carries the trucks that supply the pipelines, anchors, ropes and everything else that keeps the Gulf Of Mexico oil rigs pumping... And that is why it is so important—not just statewide, but nationally—to pursue efforts to expand this road and make sure it is well protected against storms. There would be a major impact all around if that highway were to be cut off."

According to LA 1 Coalition Executive Director Roy Francis, the \$4.5 million will be used to stabilize and raise the elevation of sections of LA 1 from Golden Meadow to Grand Isle, and for the construction of shoulders along that same portion of the highway. A 20 percent state match will be required to proceed with the projects.

The federal transportation bill must now be approved by the full Senate, then move on to the House for committee and full House approval. Congressman Billy Tauzin, who has also worked tirelessly for improvements to LA 1, will be the highway's chief champion in the House. He may be successful in securing additional funds to extend the shoulder construction to Grand Isle, as the Coalition had earlier proposed.

*For more on this story, read the
"Chairman's Report" on page 3.*



Sen. Mary Landrieu (seen here with the LA 1 Coalition's Roy Francis and Ted Falgout) visited Port Fourchon on August 14 as part of a tour of southeast Louisiana. Much of her trip was spent seeing, first-hand, the effects of coastal land loss, as well as the impacts of offshore energy activity on LA 1. "For every day that I am in the Senate, I'm going to work every way I know how to get the deal that's best for us," she said.

WE NEED YOUR LETTER OF SUPPORT

For more than five years, members of the LA 1 Coalition has been vocal advocates of highway improvements, and we are fortunate to have a dedicated Congressional delegation fighting for our cause in Washington. A letter-writing campaign is an effective way to keep this momentum going. Please take a minute to read the sample letter below and send it or a similar letter to U.S. Senators Landrieu and Breaux, and Congressman Tauzin.

Dear Congressman Tauzin:

On behalf of myself, my family and my company ABC Fabrication of Larose, Louisiana, let me personally thank you for your support of efforts to secure desperately needed funding for highway improvements in our area. It is clear that you and Louisiana's entire congressional delegation understand the contributions our state makes to our national energy supply, as well as the significant impacts we experience as a result of this important role.

Photos of our diminished coastline and a threatened LA Highway 1 leave no doubt as to the fate we face if action isn't taken immediately. We appreciate all of your work on this issue in the past, and urge you to continue pushing for all possible methods of returning a portion of federal revenue from energy production off of our dwindling coast back to our state for crucial infrastructure improvements.

As a businessman here in southeast Louisiana, I take a particular interest in the stability of our current infrastructure and plans for future highway improvements. But my support of improvements to LA Highway 1 goes beyond my personal business reasons. As I see, hear and read about the expansion of offshore oil and gas production, I also recognize the great growth occurring at Port Fourchon as it serves as a focal point for all of this activity in the central Gulf of Mexico region. This great economic news is coupled with troubling news about our infrastructure and a dire warning about our nation's future energy supply if federal relief does not come soon.

As I know that you are aware, the only road connecting Port Fourchon to the rest of Louisiana and the entire United States is LA Highway 1, a fragile, two-lane highway prone to be impassable during rising flood waters. In 2001, Congress identified LA Highway 1 as a High Priority Corridor, one of only 44 in the country. This is a step in the right direction, but funding for improvements is crucial. If LA Highway 1 were to be rendered in-serviceable, even for just a few days, the nation's energy supply would be crippled.

The facts are indisputable: The United States must maintain critical infrastructure that supports domestic energy production. A national energy policy must address critical energy infrastructure like LA Highway 1, or we will experience an energy crisis of disastrous proportions. How can we have sound energy policy if we fail to maintain our current energy supply?

We stand behind you and our entire delegation as you fight for what's right for Louisiana, and again, we thank you for your commitment to this cause.

Sincerely,
Joe Smith

U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman Hears from LA 1 Supporters

As a former vice-presidential candidate, U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman campaigned on building the economy and saving jobs. At a July 12 briefing in New Orleans, he was asked to help save Louisiana's dwindling coastline and build up its threatened infrastructure. Lieberman is a member of the Senate's influential Environment and Public Works Committee. He was invited to the meeting as a guest of U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu.

Greater Lafourche Port Commission's Ted Falgout discussed the important role played by Port Fourchon and its only highway link, LA Highway 1, to this nation's energy supply during his presentation. The port, Falgout said, provides 18 percent of the energy used in the U.S., and since 1,000 trucks a day travel LA 1 to and from the port, the vulnerable two-lane highway needs protection and improvements.

"The last time I checked, there weren't many places wanting to line up to take Louisiana's place in the oil and gas industry," Falgout explained. While the state's coastal waters contribute to 74 percent of federal royalty revenue, no funding is returned to the state specifically for maintaining critical energy infrastructure like LA 1.

Sen. Lieberman appeared to be moved by the testimony. "You've made a very strong case and educated me," he said. "You have convinced me that this is a matter of national significance, both environmentally and economically, and therefore, the federal government... must take a role in protecting this extraordinary resource."



To Contact Our Capitol Hill Delegation:

U.S. Rep. Billy Tauzin
2183 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

U.S. Sen. John Breaux
503 Hart S.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu
724 Hart S.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman's Report

-by Ted Falgout, Executive Director, Greater Lafourche Port Commission



LA 1 Gets the Attention of Washington

All signs are still very positive for the success of our project with visible progress being made almost daily. A major accomplishment for support of our existing highway was a Senate Appropriation Committee vote to include \$4.5 million to improve sections of the existing LA 1 from Golden Meadow to Grand Isle in the federal transportation bill.

The original funding request made by the LA 1 Coalition was for \$7 million, which would have allowed us to add shoulders all the way from Golden Meadow to Grand Isle and overlay the section from Golden Meadow to Leeville.

Although the \$4.5 million is not yet "in the bank" as we say, the funds were approved at the request of our own U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and she deserves much credit for her work on the Senate side. The transportation funding bill will now go to the House for concurrence, where Congressman Billy Tauzin can hopefully spearhead the inclusion of an equal or even greater amount of highway money for LA 1. The bill will then be sent to a Conference Committee and

ultimately the President for his approval.

Last year the Coalition was successful in obtaining \$3 million from the federal transportation bill, which is being used towards design of the new highway. Again, please thank our Congressional Delegation for their continued support of our efforts.

Another recent announcement was the approval of the new five-year program for Federal OCS oil and gas leasing for the years 2002-2007. MMS Director Johnnie Burton was quoted as saying, "The new program will help meet the future energy needs of our country in an environmentally sound manner."

***The MMS estimates that
the new five-year OCS
leasing program will
produce enough oil to meet
the nation's transportation
needs for two to five years.***

Currently, the OCS provides 25 percent of the total oil and gas produced in the U.S. The MMS estimates that the new five-year OCS leasing program will produce enough oil to meet the nation's transportation needs for two to five years, and enough gas to run every home in America for two to three years.

This is quite impressive! Guess what will be the key highway transportation system called upon to support all this activity? You guessed it, LA 1. This is the same highway that MMS acknowledges will become severely strained and unable to sustain the level of development of OCS activity.

Let's hope that while Congress is developing a National Energy Policy, members have the foresight to include a mechanism to fund the energy support infrastructure necessary to accommodate this aggressive leasing policy, especially since MMS collected nearly \$10 billion in revenues last year and very little was shared with the state responsible for supporting the majority of this activity.

Ms. Burton recently indicated that, personally, she favored the concept of coastal impact assistance, although she did not endorse any specific legislation. She was also quoted as saying, "I really think the states right now have almost no reason to want drilling off their shores, if it is going to impact them negatively and they don't see any kind of benefit."

Hopefully Congress can fix the huge inequity that exists in revenue sharing with coastal producing states before they start to follow Florida and California and ban drilling off their coasts.



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THANK YOU!

DID YOU KNOW?

***Since 1955,
the federal government has
collected over \$120 billion
in revenue from
OCS energy production.***

For Your Information...

If you would like to receive additional copies of "One to One" or more information on the LA 1 Coalition, call Roy Francis, Executive Director, at (985) 448-4485 or write to us at P.O. Box 2048-NSU, Thibodaux, LA 70310. Our office is located on the campus of Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA, within the offices of the South Louisiana Economic Council. The LA 1 Coalition is a non-profit 501(c4) corporation. Editor: Jennifer Armand