



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"...conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them."



SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT SETBACK IN THE COASTAL ZONE

WHEREAS, sea level rose at an average global rate of 1.0-2.0 mm/yr over the past 100 years, and

WHEREAS, the rate of global sea-level rise is expected to accelerate two-to-five-fold over the next 100 years as a result of global warming, and

WHEREAS, deltaic landforms in parts of coastal Louisiana are naturally de-watering and compacting as sea-level rises, making the apparent or relative rate of sea-level rise approximately five times greater than the global average, and

WHEREAS, the impacts of sea-level rise and natural deltaic processes are aggravated by human activities such as levee construction along the Mississippi River, ground water withdrawals, and canal dredging through marshes, passes and barrier islands, and

WHEREAS, changes in tidal amplitude have caused salt-water intrusion into many formerly fresh and brackish water habitats, lowering their productivity and value to fish and wildlife, and

WHEREAS, roughly 1 million acres of south Louisiana wetlands have been inundated and converted to open water since 1940, and Louisiana's barrier islands have eroded to be two-thirds of the size they were in 1900, and

WHEREAS, low-lying coastal wetlands and barrier islands in the Deltaic Plain region of South Louisiana are prone to migrate inland as sea-level rises, if barriers to landward migration do not exist, and

WHEREAS, if sea-level rise accelerates during the 21st century, as predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, much of the remaining Louisiana coastal zone will become more vulnerable to shoreline retreat and coastal land loss.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) calls for increased protection for existing coastal wetlands and increased scrutiny of dredge-and-fill permits by state and federal regulatory agencies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF urges that sea-level rise be considered and formally integrated into restoration, management and regulatory programs of the Office of Coastal Restoration and Management within the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) and that LDNR adopt policies and regulations to establish setback lines for coastal development that will allow for the natural migration of wetlands, barrier islands and other coastal habitats as sea-level rises.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in convention assembled, 62nd Annual Meeting, March 4, 2001 in Many, Louisiana.