



***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

November 15, 2022

**Re: Docket No. FD 36633, Louisiana 23 Development Company, LLC –  
 Construction and Operation Exemption –Plaquemines Parish, La.;  
 Preliminary Environmental Consultation**

**Dear Sir/Madam:**

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10901, Louisiana 23 Development Company, LLC (LA23) intends to file for approval from the Surface Transportation Board (Board) to construct and operate approximately 9 miles of new rail line known as the LA Gateway Rail Extension (LA Gateway) that would extend from the current end of the existing New Orleans and Gulf Coast Railway (NOGC) line and run to the future site of a 149-acre container terminal facility known as the Louisiana Gateway Terminal. As part of its licensing process, the Board, through its Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA), will conduct an environmental review of the proposed rail line in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.), the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. Part 1105, and related environmental laws. OEA will evaluate the potential environmental and historic impacts of the proposed rail line as well as any other reasonable and feasible alternatives that may be identified.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the LA Gateway and to request information from your agency on resources under your jurisdiction or of which you have specialized knowledge that could be affected by the LA Gateway. OEA asks that you identify any permits and approvals that could be required of LA23 and any other information that could inform the development of the range of alternatives to be considered during the environmental review. The information you provide will help us determine what type of NEPA document should be prepared.

**Description of the Proposed Rail Line**

As noted above, the proposed LA Gateway involves the construction and operation of approximately 9 miles of new common carrier rail line. The purpose of the LA Gateway is to build a rail corridor that connects the future Louisiana Gateway Terminal to the Class I railroad network via NOGC.

Construction of the LA Gateway is being sponsored by LA23, a privately held firm working as the strategic developer for the Plaquemines Port Harbor & Terminal District (PPHTD), a public corporation and political subdivision of the State of Louisiana that is governed by the Plaquemines Parish Commission Council. According to LA23, PPHTD's

territorial jurisdiction includes all of Plaquemines Parish, making it one of the nation's largest seaports. Within that jurisdiction, PPHTD's mission is to expand its operations as a logistics distribution center while continuously improving its services and offering business opportunities to both the private and public sectors.

LA23 states that there are no support facilities, yards, or runarounds currently planned for the rail extension project area: LA23's main objective is to connect the 149-acre LA Gateway Terminal to the existing NOGC rail line. Should the Board approve the LA Gateway, NOGC would operate and maintain the line. NOGC already operates a 32-mile former Union Pacific Railroad branch line outside New Orleans that connects with the UP mainline in Westwego, Louisiana. NOGC serves over 20 switching and industrial customers on this line. LA23 indicates that the LA Gateway would serve trains averaging 10 mph and 2,500 feet long with two GP-38-3 locomotives. These trains would be TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) container unit trains carrying commercial goods.

Because LA23 has only completed the initial engineering design, the appended map (Attachment 2) depicts the conceptual centerline and project area for the proposed rail line. OEA will provide copies of more detailed maps as they become available. OEA will develop and review the final set of alternatives to be examined in the NEPA document in consultation with appropriate federal, state, and local agency; tribes; other interested stakeholders; and the public.

### **Environmental Review Process**

This letter begins the process by which OEA will assess the potential environmental and historic impacts of constructing and operating the proposed rail line. The process will include the preparation of a draft and final environmental document, which for rail construction proposals is normally an environmental impact statement (EIS), as specified in the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. § 1105.6(a). Your response to this inquiry will assist OEA in determining if an EIS is appropriate in this case or if, alternatively, an environmental assessment (EA) could be prepared.

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. §§ 1500–1508) and the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. § 1105, OEA will be the lead federal agency in the preparation of the environmental document that will evaluate the potential environmental effects of LA23's proposal, including reasonable and feasible alternatives and the no-action alternative. Freese and Nichols, Inc., the third-party contractor for this project, will assist OEA in conducting the environmental review. After its analyses, OEA will prepare the draft environmental document and issue it for public review and comment, distributing the document pursuant to the requirements of NEPA and the Board's environmental rules. A final environmental document will then be prepared addressing comments on the draft and including final recommendations for environmental mitigation. The Board will then decide whether to approve, approve with conditions (which could include conditions designed to mitigate potential impacts on the environment), or deny approval for the proposed rail line described above. In reaching its decision, the Board will consider the entire environmental record, including all public comments received, the draft and final environmental documents, and OEA's final recommended environmental mitigation.

## Request for Initial Comments

We appreciate your assistance in preliminarily identifying whether any resources of concern to your agency may be affected by the proposed rail line and welcome any additional issues or concerns that you consider appropriate. We respectfully request your response by **December 15, 2022** so that we may begin to schedule and conduct any necessary follow-up activities.

You may submit comments electronically through the Board's website at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov) by clicking on the "E-Filing" link on the left side of the home page and then selecting "Environmental Comments." Brief comments may be typed within the comment field provided or you may attach comments as a separate file. You may also send your written comments electronically to Adam Assenza, OEA's Project Manager for the environmental review, at [Adam.Assenza@stb.gov](mailto:Adam.Assenza@stb.gov), copying Nina Reins at [nina.reins@freese.com](mailto:nina.reins@freese.com). If you have any questions or would like to arrange a virtual meeting or conference call with OEA, please feel free to contact Adam Assenza by phone at (202) 245-0301 or by email. Comments received will be made available to the public on the Board's website. We look forward to your participation in the Board's environmental review process.

Sincerely,



Danielle Gosselin

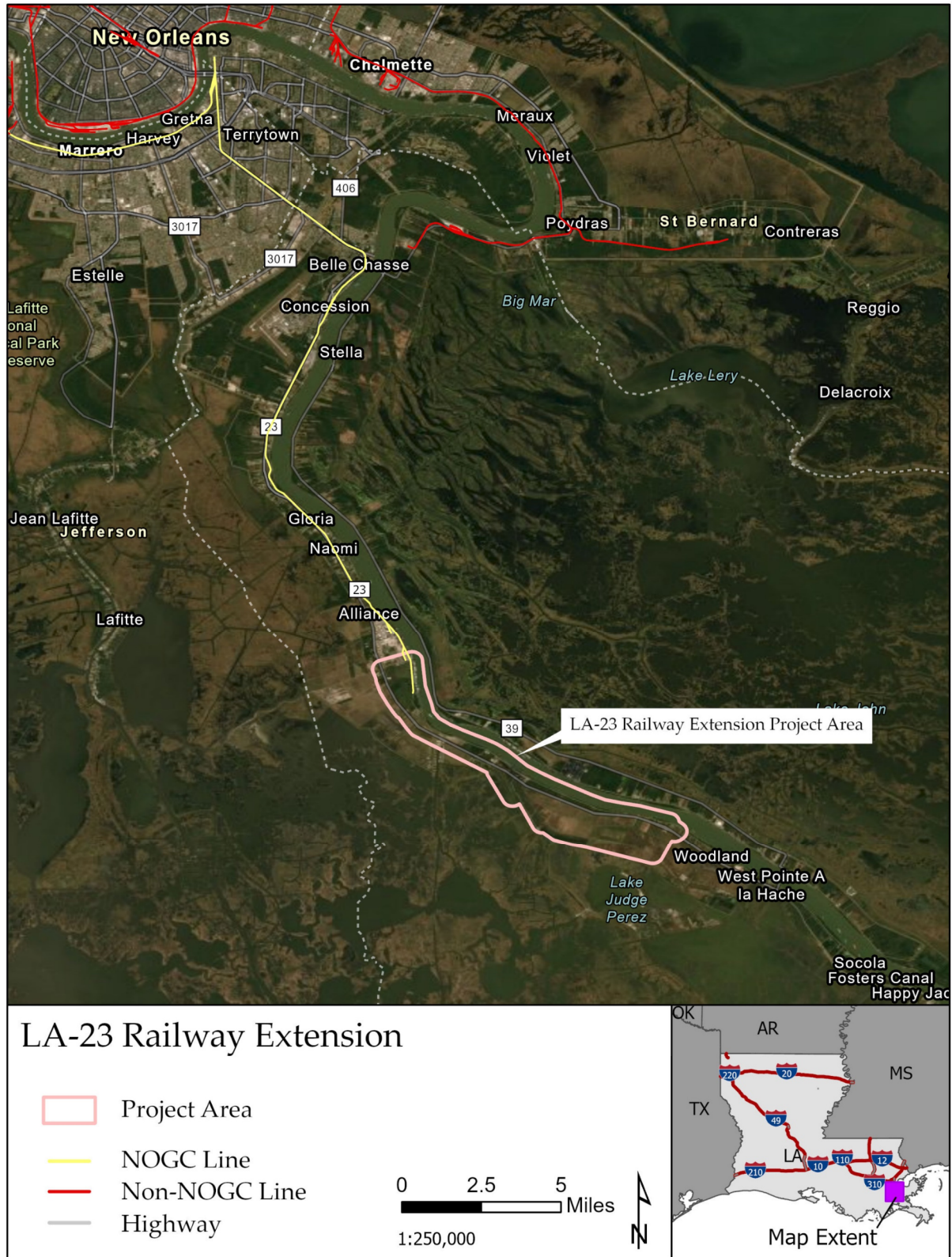
Director

Office of Environmental Analysis

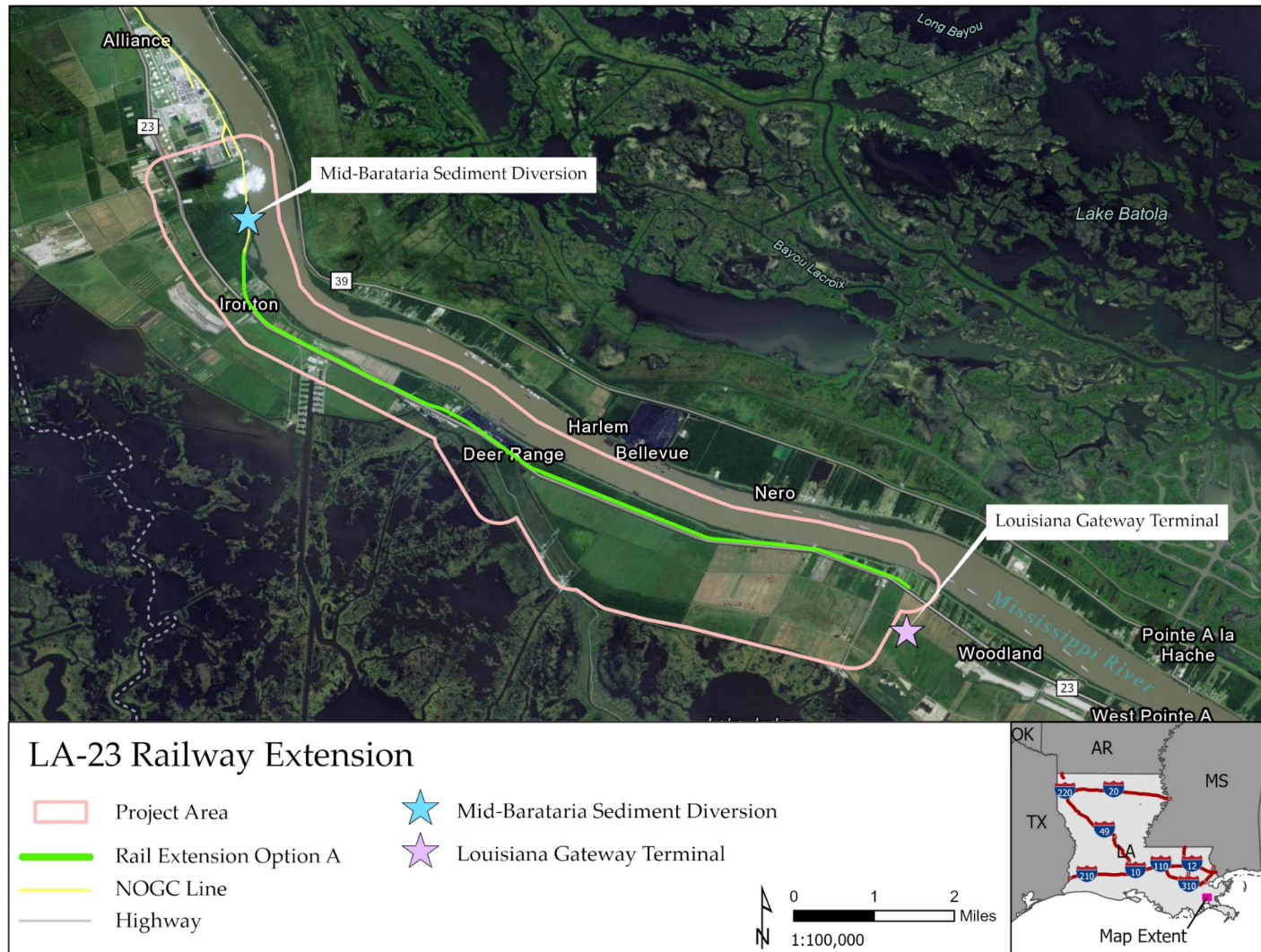
### Attachments:

- 1 - PPHTD New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railway extension project location
- 2 - PPHTD New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railway extension project site map

Attachment 1 - PPHTD New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railway extension project location



Attachment 2 - PPHTD New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railway extension project site map



| Agency                                  | Acronym  | First Name     | Last Name      | Position                                 | Address - Line 1                        | Address - Line 2           | E-mail                        | Regular Mail Date | Date E-Mailed |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service          | USFWS    | Brigette       | Firmin         | Deputy Field Supervisor, Louisiana       | 200 Dulles Drive                        | Lafayette, LA 70506        | Brigette_Firmin@fws.gov       | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service          | USFWS    | Leopoldo       | Miranda-Castro | Regional Director, Southeast Region      | 1875 Century Boulevard                  | Atlanta, GA 30345          | leopoldo_miranda@fws.gov      | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service          | USFWS    | Cathy          | Breaux         | Biologist, Louisiana Ecological Services | 200 Dulles Drive                        | Lafayette, LA 70506        | cathy_breaux@fws.gov          | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers            | USACE    | Amy            | Powell         | Operations Manager - Completed Works     | 7400 Leake Avenue                       | New Orleans, LA 70118      | Amy.E.Powell@usace.army.mil   | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers            | USACE    | Martin         | Mayer          | Regulatory Division Chief                | 7400 Leake Avenue                       | New Orleans, LA 70118      | Martin.S.Mayer@usace.army.mil | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency -  | EPA      | Robert         | Houston        | Staff Director, Communities, Tribes, and | 1201 Elm Street, Suite 500              | Dallas, TX 75270           | houston.robert@epa.gov        | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency -  | EPA      | Michael        | Jansky         | NEPA Reviewer                            | 1201 Elm Street, Suite 500              | Dallas, TX 75270           | jansky.michael@epa.gov        | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural | NRCS     | Richard        | Kacir          | Louisiana State Conservationist          |                                         |                            | richard.kacir@usda.gov        | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| National Park Service                   | NPS      | Bert           | Frost          | Regional Director                        | 601 Riverfront Drive                    | Omaha, NE 68102-4226       | bert.frost@nps.gov            | 11/15/2022        |               |
| National Geodetic Survey                | NGS      | Juliana        | Blackwell      | Director                                 | 1315 East-West Highway                  | Silver Spring, MD 20910    | ngs.info@center@noaa.gov      | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs                | BIA      |                |                | Eastern Regional Office                  | 545 Marriott Drive Suite 700            | Nashville, TN 37214        | eastern.inquiries@bia.gov     | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Federal Aviation Administration         | FAA      | Justin         | Barker         | Manager -                                | 10101 Hillwood Parkway                  | Fort Worth, TX 76177       | justin.barker@faa.gov         | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Federal Railroad Administration         | FRD      | John           | Megary         | Regional Administrator (Region 5)        | 4100 International Plaza, Suite 450     | Fort Worth, Texas 76109    | john.megary@fra.dot.gov       | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Louisiana Department of Environmental   | LDEQ     | Amanda         | Vincent        |                                          | 602 North Fifth Street, Galvez Building | Baton Rouge, LA 70802      | amanda.vincent@la.gov         | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Louisiana Department of Natural         | LDNR-OCM | Keith          | Lovell         | Assistant Secretary - Office of Costal   | P.O. Box 44487                          | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4487 | keith.lovell@la.gov           | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Louisiana Department of Wildlife and    |          |                |                |                                          |                                         |                            |                               |                   |               |
| Fisheries                               | LDWF     | Lawrence "Les" | Rosso, Jr.     | Public Lands Utilization Manager         | 2000 Quail Drive                        | Baton Rouge, LA 70808      | Les.Rosso@la.gov              | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Louisiana Department of Wildlife and    | LDWF     | David          | Butler         | Louisiana Natural Heritage Program       | 2000 Quail Drive                        | Baton Rouge, LA 70808      | dbutler@dwf.la.gov            | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Coastal Protection and Restoration      | CPRA     | Ias            | Singh          | Engineer 7 Operations Division           | 150 Terrace Ave                         | Baton Rouge, LA 70802      | ias.singh@LA.GOV              | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Louisiana Department of Transportation  | LADOTD   | Nancy          | Atkins         | LADOTD District 2                        | PO Box 9180                             | Bridge City, LA 70096-9180 | ndatkins@la.gov               | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Governor's Office of Homeland Security  | GOSEP    | Mike           | Steele         | Communications Director                  | 7667 Independence Boulevard             | Baton Rouge, LA 70806      | mike.steele@la.gov            | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish Government           | PPG      | Valerie        | Ragas          | PPG Permits Office                       | 333 F. Edward Hebert Blvd, Bldg 300     | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | vragas@ppgov.net              | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish Government           | PPG      | Ken            | Dugas          | Chief Engineer                           | 333 F. Edward Hebert Blvd, Bldg 300     | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | kdugas@ppgov.net              | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish Government           | PPG      | Robert         | Spears         | Coastal Program Manager - Coastal Zone   | 333 F. Edward Hebert Blvd, Bldg 300     | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | rspears@ppgov.net             | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Parish Office of Homeland Security and  | OHSEP    | Patrick        | Harvey         |                                          | 8056 Highway 23, Suite 308              | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | pharvey@ppgov.net             | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish School Board         |          | Denis          | Rousselle      | Superintendent                           | 1484 Woodland Hwy                       | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | drousselle@pspb.org           | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish School Board -       |          | Bobby          | Ingraham       | District 7 - Member                      | 1484 Woodland Hwy                       | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | bingraham@pspb.org            | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Parish President                        |          | Kirk           | Lepine         |                                          | 333 F. Edward Hebert Boulevard,         | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | klepine@ppgov.net             | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Parish Council Member                   |          | Carlton Sr.    | LaFrance       | District 7 Representative                | 28028 Highway 23, Suite 205             | Port Sulphur, LA 70083     | clafrance@ppgov.net           | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish Government           |          |                |                |                                          | 333 F Edward Hebert Blvd building 100   | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Plaquemines Parish Water Dept           |          |                |                |                                          | 333 F Edward Hebert Blvd                | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Plaquemines Parish Council              |          |                |                |                                          | 106 Ave C                               | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | cpoun@ppgov.net               | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish Government           |          |                |                |                                          | 479 F Edward Hebert Blvd                | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     | apccas@ppgov.net              | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
| Plaquemines Parish Transportation       |          |                |                |                                          | 506 F Edward Hebert Blvd                | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office     |          |                |                |                                          | 123 Civic Dr.                           | Port Sulphur, LA 70083     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office     |          |                |                |                                          | 111 Turner Rd.                          | Port Sulphur, LA 70083     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Plaquemines Parish Permit Office        |          |                |                |                                          | 333 F Edward Hebert Blvd.               | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| South Plaquemines High School           |          |                |                |                                          | 34121 LA-23                             | Buras, LA 70041            |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| South Plaquemines Elementary School     |          |                |                |                                          | 311 Civic Dr.                           | Port Sulphur, LA 70083     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Belle Chasse Elementary School          |          |                |                |                                          | 539 F Edward Hebert Blvd.               | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Belle Chasse Middle School              |          |                |                |                                          | 13476 LA-23                             | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Belle Chasse High School                |          |                |                |                                          | 8346 LA-23                              | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Boothville-Venice Elementary School     |          |                |                |                                          | 1 Oiler Dr.                             | Buras, LA 70041            |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Belle Chasse Primary School             |          |                |                |                                          | 601 F Edward Hebert Blvd.               | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Phoenix High School                     |          |                |                |                                          | 12700 LA-39                             | Braithwaite, LA 70040      |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Plaquemines Parish Water Works          |          |                |                |                                          | P.O. Box 940                            | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Plaquemines Parish Drainage             |          |                |                |                                          | 333 F Edward Hebert Boulevard,          | Belle Chasse, LA           |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| Department                              |          | Danny          | Spears         | Superintendent                           | Building 100                            |                            |                               |                   |               |
|                                         |          | Bill           | Cassidy        | U.S. Senator                             | P.O. Box 80505                          | Baton Rouge, LA 70898      |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
|                                         |          | John           | Kennedy        | U.S. Senator                             | P.O. Box 80418                          | Baton Rouge, LA 70898      | info@johnkennedy.com          | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
|                                         |          | Steve          | Scalise        | U. S. Representative - 1st Congressional | P.O. Box 23219                          | Jefferson, LA 70183        |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
|                                         |          | Eric           | Skrimetta      | Public Service Commission - District 1   | P.O. Box 55896                          | Metairie, LA 70055         | eric.skrimetta@la.gov         | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
|                                         |          | Sandy          | Holloway       | Member, BESE (Board of Elementary and    | P.O. Box 1360                           | Thibodaux, LA 70302        | Sandy.Holloway@la.gov         | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
|                                         |          | Sharon         | Hewitt         | State Senator - 1st Senatorial District  | 250 Bouscaren St., Ste. 201             | Slidell, LA 70458          | HewittS@legis.la.gov          | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
|                                         |          | Gary Jr.       | Carter         | State Senator - 7th Senatorial District  | 424 Aurora Oaks Dr.                     | New Orleans, LA 70131-3667 | CarterG@legis.la.gov          | 11/15/2022        | 11/17/2022    |
|                                         |          | Patrick        | Connick        | State Senator - 8th Senatorial District  | 720 Fos Ave.                            | Harvey, LA 70058-2623      |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
|                                         |          | Ray            | Garofalo       | State Representative - 103rd             | 2304 Etienne Dr.                        | Meraux, LA 70075-2585      |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
|                                         |          | Mack           | Cormier        | State Representative - 105th             | P.O. Box 518                            | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
|                                         |          | Gerald Jr.     | Turlich        | Sheriff                                  | 114 Wild Magnolia Cir.                  | Belle Chasse, LA 70037     |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |
| ENTERGY LOUISIANA LLC                   |          |                |                |                                          | 639 LOYOLA AVE                          | New Orleans, LA            |                               | 11/15/2022        |               |

| Agency                                       | First Name | Last Name | Position        | Address - Line 2                   | Address - Line 2           | E-mail                                                                       | Certified Mail Date | Date E-Mailed |
|----------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office | Kristin    | Sanders   | SHPO            | PO Box 44247                       | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4241 | <a href="mailto:ksanders@crt.la.gov">ksanders@crt.la.gov</a>                 | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana                | Kimberly   | Walden    | THPO            | PO Box 661                         | Charenton, LA 70523        | <a href="mailto:THPO@chitimacha.gov">THPO@chitimacha.gov</a>                 | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana                | Melissa    | Darden    | Chairman        | PO Box 661                         | Charenton, LA 70523        | <a href="mailto:melissad@chitimacha.gov">melissad@chitimacha.gov</a>         | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana                 | Kristian   | Poncho    | THPO            | PO Box 10                          | Elton, LA 70352            | <a href="mailto:kponcho@coushatta.org">kponcho@coushatta.org</a>             | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana                 | Jonathan   | Cernek    | Chairman        | PO Box 818                         | Elton, LA 70352            | <a href="mailto:rriich@coushatta.org">rriich@coushatta.org</a>               | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Jena Band of Choctaw Indians                 | Johnna     | Flynn     | THPO            | PO Box 14                          | Jena, LA 71342             | <a href="mailto:jflynn@jenachoctaw.org">jflynn@jenachoctaw.org</a>           | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Jena Band of Choctaw Indians                 | B. Cheryl  | Smith     | Principal Chief | PO Box 14                          | Jena, LA 71342             | <a href="mailto:Chief@jenachoctaw.org">Chief@jenachoctaw.org</a>             | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana             | Marshall   | Pierite   | Chairman        | 150 Melacon Road,<br>P.O. Box 1589 | Marksville, LA 71351       | <a href="mailto:mpierite@tunica.org">mpierite@tunica.org</a>                 | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana             | Earl       | Barbry    | THPO            | 150 Melacon Road                   | Marksville, LA 71351       | <a href="mailto:earlii@tunicabiloxi.org">earlii@tunicabiloxi.org</a>         | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Apache Tribe of Oklahoma                     | Bobby      | Komardley | Chairman        | PO Box 1330                        | Anadarko, OK 73005         | <a href="mailto:bkomardley@outlook.com">bkomardley@outlook.com</a>           | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma                   | Ian        | Thompson  | THPO            | PO Box 1210                        | Durant, OK 74702-1210      | <a href="mailto:ithompson@choctawnation.com">ithompson@choctawnation.com</a> | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma                   | Gary       | Batton    | Chief           | PO Box 1210                        | Durant, OK 74702-1210      | <a href="mailto:gbatton@choctawnation.com">gbatton@choctawnation.com</a>     | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians          | Cyrus      | Ben       | Chief           | PO Box 6010                        | Choctaw, MS 39350          | <a href="mailto:info@choctaw.org">info@choctaw.org</a>                       | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Seminole Tribe of Florida                    | Marcus     | Oseola    | Chairman        | 6300 Stirling Road                 | Hollywood, FL 33024        | <a href="mailto:Chairman@semtribe.com">Chairman@semtribe.com</a>             | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |
| Seminole Tribe of Florida                    | Paul N.    | Backhouse | THPO            | 30290 Josie Billie                 | Clewiston, FL 33440        | <a href="mailto:paulbackhouse@semtribe.com">paulbackhouse@semtribe.com</a>   | 11/16/2023          | 11/17/2023    |