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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
OFFICE OF OCEAN AND COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

JAN 4 2002

FEDERAL AGENCY COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT COORDINATORS

Notice of §312 Evaluation Scheduled for the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program

Federal officials from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will evaluate the operation and management of the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program (LCRP) during the week of February 18, 2002. The Department of Natural Resources is the lead agency for the LCRP and receives funding from NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) through the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972, as amended. Periodic evaluations of coastal programs are required by §312 of the CZMA. This review covers the period of March 1997 to February 2002.

The NOAA evaluation team will examine the extent to which the State is addressing the national coastal management objectives contained in §303(2) of the CZMA, completing grant tasks, implementing and enforcing the LCRP, and adhering to programmatic terms and conditions of financial assistance awards under the CZMA. This review will also assess the LCRP's progress in addressing the concerns expressed in the most recent 312 Evaluation Findings, dated September 18, 1997. In addition to these broad programmatic criteria, the Evaluation Team will examine several specific issues. These include:

- The effectiveness of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in monitoring and enforcing the core authorities forming the legal basis of the LCRP;
- Status of local coastal programs, including implementation of approved programs and efforts by DNR to encourage increased local participation;
- Implementation of Federal consistency authority;
- Public outreach efforts and opportunities for participation by the public in the coastal management planning and decisionmaking process;
- Status of wetlands restoration and mitigation programs within DNR, including the implementation of the State Coastal Wetlands Conservation Plan and the conduct of Natural Resource Damage Assessment activities;
- Effectiveness of intergovernmental coordination and cooperation in LCRP implementation; and
- Program accomplishments, including changes to the core statutory and regulatory provisions of the LCRP.

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During the five-day site visit to Louisiana, the NOAA Evaluation Team will interview relevant representatives of Federal, state and local agencies, and other interested parties. In addition, a public meeting will be held to provide an opportunity for public comment on the operation and management of the LCRP on Wednesday, February 20, 2002, at 7:00 p.m. at the LaSalle Office Building, 617 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The final evaluation findings will be sent to persons participating in the evaluation, announced in the *Federal Register*, and made available upon written request.

OCRM welcomes your participation in this evaluation process. To arrange a meeting with our staff, either before or during the site visit, please contact Ralph Cantral, evaluation team leader, at (301) 713-3155, Extension 118; FAX: (301) 713-4012; or by email at Ralph.Cantral@noaa.gov.