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New Poll Shows Louisianans' Overwhelming Bipartisan Support for Coastal Restoration

Majority of coastal voters support sediment diversions, believe more funds should be allocated to restoration solutions

(NEW ORLEANS – Sept. 27, 2018) There is widespread, bipartisan support for action in addressing Louisiana's coastal land loss crisis, according to a new [poll released today](#) by [BDPC, LLC + Pinsonat](#) and [Restore the Mississippi River Delta](#). Of note, 79 percent of coastal voters said they support sediment diversions, large-scale engineering projects that would be strategically operated to direct sediment and fresh water from the Mississippi River into nearby wetlands, building and maintaining thousands of acres of land over time. Only 5 percent of those voters oppose. Additionally, an overwhelming 97 percent of Louisiana coastal voters say that the state should still work to maintain as much coastal land as possible even if the coast cannot be restored to its previous footprint.

While most coastal voters (79 percent) support sediment diversions, that number increases to 92 percent when voters are asked if they would support sediment diversions knowing these projects would create a wetland buffer, protecting homes from storm surge and hurricanes. Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) is currently advancing the Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton sediment diversions, two cornerstone Coastal Master Plan projects on either side of the river in Plaquemines Parish. Without action, Barataria Basin alone could lose 500 square miles of land over the next 50 years.

"We face many future challenges, but people realize that using the power and sediment of the Mississippi River through diversions is essential to securing a future for our region. Working alongside other projects throughout the coast, we can rebuild and sustain a functioning and protective landscape here," said [Steve Cochran](#), campaign director for [Restore the Mississippi River Delta](#).

The [poll](#) also identifies extensive support for investing in coastal restoration, protecting funds committed to restoration and allocating additional resources to address the state's land loss problem. Of note, 91 percent of respondents indicated that they want state government to ensure current dedicated funds are spent on coastal restoration and protection, and a majority of Louisiana coastal voters (77 percent) think not enough money is being spent on coastal protection efforts.

"This poll confirms that the people of Louisiana recognize the urgency of our coastal crisis and acknowledge what needs to be done to protect our coast. Coastal residents realize that this issue will directly impact them in the near future, which is why the majority of the state believes coastal restoration must be implemented – even if that means securing additional funding," continued Cochran.

While 49 percent of the respondents think that coastal land loss will affect them within the year, 77 percent think they will be affected within 10 years. The poll found that voters also strongly support the Coastal Master Plan and the commitment of funds to implement key projects

The poll was conducted by [BDPC, LLC + Pinsonat](#) for the National Audubon Society on behalf of [Restore the Mississippi River Delta](#) to determine the familiarity, interest and support for major issues facing coastal Louisiana. According to Bernie Pinsonat, political consultant at BDPC LLC + Pinsonat, “The results of this particular poll were unique because we usually don’t see such an overwhelming, bipartisan majority of support for action. Unlike many other issues, Louisianans are in broad agreement about doing whatever it takes to save our coast and protect our future.”

Interviews for this poll were completed by trained live operators over the phone with 809 likely Louisiana coastal voters from August 29 through September 5, 2018. Results were analyzed to ensure consistency in responses. The overall sample error for the statewide statistics is not greater than plus or minus 3.0 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence.

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About Restore the Mississippi River Delta:

Restore the Mississippi River Delta is working to protect people, wildlife and jobs by reconnecting the river with its wetlands. As our region faces the crisis of threatening land loss, we offer science-based solutions through a comprehensive approach to restoration. Composed of conservation, policy, science and outreach experts from [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [National Audubon Society](#), the [National Wildlife Federation](#), [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#) and [Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation](#), we are located in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Washington, D.C.; and around the United States. Learn more at [MississippiRiverDelta.org](#) and connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About BDPC LLC + Pinsonat:

BDPC: *Greg Rigamer is the owner and CEO of BDPC, LLC. Mr. Rigamer has forty years of professional experience as a management consultant serving corporate and governmental interests. He is also widely recognized for his work as a demographer and political consultant. His research and analytical reports have been quoted extensively in both local and national press and he is recognized as an expert in demographic and community affairs by the United States Federal Court. Mr. Rigamer received a Bachelor of Arts from Louisiana State University in Philosophy and a Master of Science in Urban Studies from the University of New Orleans. He was the recipient of the 2007 University of New Orleans’ Distinguished Alumnus Award.*

Bernie Pinsonat, *formerly a partner in the highly successful research firm Southern Media & Opinions Research, continues conducting surveys under the name Bernie R Pinsonat, Inc. His partner, Lawrence McKenzie, retired in 2017. In 1978, Bernie Pinsonat and his partner, Lawrence McKenzie, started the research firm Southern Media & Opinion Research, Inc. SMOR became one of the most successful survey firms in Louisiana. SMOR conducted surveys for fortune five hundred companies, Louisiana Companies, media organization and hundreds of political clients. Bernie Pinsonat became one of the most recognizable names in politics as he was called upon by national and Louisiana news organizations for his insights and perspective of current political events. Pinsonat is known throughout Louisiana and in national media circles as the "go to" interview during both political campaigns and weighty public policy discussions. In Louisiana, he has appeared on most television and radio stations as one of the most recognized news sources in Louisiana. He is often quoted in the Times Picayune, The Advocate and most newspapers throughout Louisiana.*