TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
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October 17, 2025

Large-Scale River Diversions in the Coastal Master Plan?

Ain't Dere No More. The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) has pulled the plug on the Mid-Breton Sediment Diversion, marking the second major, fully-permitted coastal project to get canceled in the past six months. Mid-Breton would have delivered water and sediment from the east bank of the Mississippi River through Plaquemines Parish into Breton Sound with hopes of building land. It had its opponents, but was not publicly contested and fought over like Mid-Barataria. At a meeting earlier this week, CPRA board members questioned why they weren't notified ahead of the decision to cancel this project. The reasons provided after the cancellation announcement were related to increased construction and maintenance costs (if only someone a decade ago would have pointed out that the costs for coastal projects were going to go up, no matter what). Chairman Dove suggested that full funding needs to be secured before CPRA would pursue major projects. As one board member noted, that isn't how it's been handled in the past. And given the state's in ability to secure new, major funding for major projects, it almost sounds like this administration is taking a knee on large-scale restoration as we've come to think of it over the past two decades (if only someone almost a decade ago would have come up with ideas for being able to fully fund major projects).

Of course, the Master Planning process could be improved upon, like any other public program, but it has done a decent job of remaining transparent and keeping the public informed on major decisions. These cancellations raise fundamental questions about the modeling, planning, and public participation that go into the Coastal Master Plan. Plus, both diversions were included in the 2026 Annual Plan that the legislature approved. Both were incorporated into baseline models, and the sustainability of other coastal projects often depends on the completion of vital projects like these now-cancelled diversions. As does the state's Nutrient Reduction and Management Strategy, such as it is. One thing is clear – bold actions to protect coastal Louisiana can't wait, but that seems to be what we're doing now.

Oil and Water—They Still Don't Mix!

In Corpus Christi and nearby communities, water and patience are in short supply. Amidst a prolonged drought and continued industrial growth, Corpus Christi is facing the very real possibility that it could run out of water in 2027 if no new source is found. The proposed solution with the most attention is the Inner Harbor Desalination Project, which would treat seawater to add to the existing supply, but this has faced opposition from several community and environmental groups due to the energy demand, the byproducts, and the now $1.1 billion price tag, which has raised concerns over who would pay and who would benefit. The area's growth over the past several decades has turned it

into the country's largest oil export-hub, hosting several major water users, like Exxon and Koch. These commercial and industrial users account for half of Corpus Christi's water demand.

Last month, after a 12-hour public hearing, the city council voted to halt the project, and last week it voted to terminate a contract with a firm that was designing the project. Despite the vote to end the contract, there's still no shortage of disagreements, and the future of the project is unclear. Though the Houston-based Gulf Coast Authority expressed interest in taking over the desal project, a lot needs to be sorted out among the city, state water authority, and residents.

It's one of many big ideas Texans are exploring to address water scarcity, and one involves the Pelican State. A Dallas-based company has been wanting to purchase water from the Toledo Bend Reservoir and build a several hundred-mile-long pipeline to deliver water to cities in the eastern part of the state. Toledo Bend, created by damming the Sabine River for water supply and hydropower, straddles Louisiana and Texas and is managed by both states. Last month, the Sabine River Authority of Louisiana took steps to begin studying the impacts of the proposal. But it can't authorize the sale without LA's House and Senate Natural Resources Committee signing off. That approval seems further out of reach after the heads of those respective committees voiced opposition to the proposed sale. Texas may have to play a different card.

Oh Say, Can You Sea?

Scientists from twenty-two countries announced a troubling finding: the recent widespread death of warm-water corals indicates Earth has reached its first major tipping point that could cause irreversible impacts to global conditions (another identified tipping point is the retreat of glaciers). In the past two years, over 80% of the world's coral reefs experienced the most widespread bleaching event on record due to rapid warming of the ocean and acidification from all that atmospheric CO_2. This dire warning emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and the need for new governance approaches. The International Maritime Organization was scheduled to vote today on the "Net-Zero Framework," which would implement fees for carbon emissions from cargo ships. The United States' relationship with the United Nations is often strained and combative, particularly regarding matters of climate change and conservation. This time is no different from the rest. The President is using more trade threats to "defend America" from the agreement. The IMO just delayed a vote until next year. If it ends up being successful, it'd be the first time a whole industry would pay for its climate pollution; a major win for the "polluter pays" principle.

Coming Up:

CRCL Coastal Stewardship Awards; Baton Rouge, LA; November 13, 2025

Tulane Environmental Law & Policy Summit; New Orleans, LA; March 5-7, 2026

Water jobs:

Program Manager, Louisiana RESTORE Act Center of Excellence; Water Institute of the Gulf; Baton Rouge, LA

Director of Philanthropy, Great Lakes & Central Regions; American Rivers; Remote (Great Lakes, Central, or Texas)

Clinical Assistant or Associate Professor, Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, New Orleans, LA

Operations Coordinator; Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana; New Orleans, LA

The Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy is a program of the Tulane University Law School. The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and legal stewardship of water.

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