



TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
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New Orleans says “No, thank you” to more data centers, for now

Not you, [The Data Center, you guys are cool](#). But those data centers that are but installations warehousing ever expanding numbers of computer server racks to service the internet, AI, and crypto mining, well, New Orleans’ leadership has put a one-year moratorium on new data centers. True, [there are a few](#) operating out of offices in downtown New Orleans ([DDD!](#)), but those seem to be just the servers that house companies’ websites and such. But the big ones, like the much discussed Meta mega-or-hyper-or-whatever scale development in Richland Parish or the [Bitcoin mine](#) being built in West Feliciana Parish (assuming that’s [still happening](#)). Anyway, a new, fairly large data center was [recently proposed](#) for New Orleans East. Neighborhood groups expressed concern over noise and energy & water consumption. And the city’s leaders have responded with a [one-year ban](#) on new data centers in the city. The idea is that the city will have the opportunity to study data centers and how appropriately they can fit in the city, but there’s an assumption that it will lead to a permanent ban. Some groups, like our friends at Delta Sierra Club, are concerned that the temporary ban isn’t sufficient and too easily circumvented. However, from where we’re sitting, more likely than the local government reversing its stance is the possibility for the state government to move to preempt such local bans. Ten years ago, the [state preempted local bans against fracking](#) for oil and gas, and such measures are common across the country when a local government’s actions conflict with a state government policy. Given the Landry administration’s [unwavering support](#) for [data centers](#) and supplying them with the needed infrastructure, even sometimes on the public’s dime, such a move wouldn’t be surprising.

The state’s next chance to preempt local bans on data centers will come this spring in the [upcoming legislative session](#), beginning March 9th. If such a law was enacted, the city may never even get the chance to prove their commitment to neighborhoods’ concerns. While many of us are shining up our dancing shoes, organizing our throws, and devouring our king cakes, in the back of our minds, we’re keeping space for pre-filings and committees and such up the river in Baton Rouge. Will there be more surprises like last year’s agency reorganization that also [eliminated a regional groundwater authority](#)?

So, no new data centers within the city, but what about the stuff keeping NOLA safe from the outside?

Twenty-and-one-half years ago, New Orleans’ coastal nature and vulnerability were exposed for all the world to see. Our levee system failed, and much of the water that caused it to fail came through the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRGO). The history, failure, action, inaction, and jurisprudence of MRGO is a saga of its own, but after Katrina, it was closed off with a surge barrier that was part of Greater New Orleans’ new levee system (HSDRRS – the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System). So, these two topics aren’t unrelated. Unfortunately, the ecosystem restoration that’s needed to complete the damage associated with MRGO has gone unfunded these two decades, until now! [An appropriations act](#) was signed last month (if you’re asking, it’s the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water

Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026) that sends to the Army Corps of Engineers [\\$7 million to be put towards MRGO ecosystem restoration](#) (it also included \$5 million to go towards reviving the Corps' Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Study that was shelved last spring. Whether or not that work was successfully kept on ice or rotted in a cupboard is still to be seen). Don't ask how much further that \$7M would have gone had it been appropriated right after HSDRRS was completed.

What about the regional bodies that were created after the storm to manage that HSDRSS? How are they doing? Well... it's a bit of a mess, to be honest. Two Flood Protection Authorities were created by merging parish levee boards. One for the East Bank and one for the West Bank, and it's the East Bank one, especially, that has been in a rough spot. Speaking of those legislative sessions, the Authority's [independence was trimmed by the state last year](#). And since then? It's not gone well! So much so that [the board is down to two members](#) and the authority's police chief is accused one of the now-resigned board members of assault (yes, the authority has its own police force). But at least that police chief has a much bigger budget for guns and cars, in keeping with [Governor Landry's team's priorities](#). And [the assault charges have been dropped](#). Silver linings!

Join Our Team!

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Have you heard the news? An illustrious group of dedicated water lawyers is searching for a new member to join our team. Yes, that's right, the Institute is looking to hire a new Senior Research Fellow!

If you or someone you know is a recent (within 2 years) JD or LLM who has a strong interest in the legal and policy dimensions of water management and stewardship, this may be the job for you! The position is slated to begin in August 2026 for two years in the fantastic location of New Orleans, Louisiana. [Apply Now!](#) We will begin interviewing candidates after Mardi Gras!

Coming Up:

[Environmental Law & Policy Summit](#)

Tulane University Law School; New Orleans, LA; March 5-7, 2026

[73rd Mineral Law Institute](#)

LSU Law Center; Baton Rouge, LA; March 19-20, 2026

[Coastal Law CLE](#)

May 7 & 8, 2026; New Orleans, LA

Water jobs:

[Senior Research Fellow](#); Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy; New Orleans, LA

[Senior Attorney, Louisiana Clean Affordable Power](#); Environmental Defense Fund

[Deputy Director of Water Resources](#); City of San José, CA

[Restoration Coordinator](#); Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana; Louisiana



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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