



TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
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If The Stage Lights Didn't Make Them Sweat, [Maybe the Questions Did!](#)

The Mayoral Forum on Water and Coast took place earlier this week on Tuesday evening at the University of New Orleans. We don't want to pat ourselves on the back *too much*, but it was "splendiferous!" While the overall tone was congenial, and [the candidates mostly agreed on all the issues surrounding water and coastal issues for New Orleans](#), some of the questions proved difficult to answer within the two-minute time limit. Thankfully, the candidates were given the opportunity to give further responses in [this questionnaire](#). Among the most discussed issues was the governance of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO), which has a [fragmented command and control structure and is often the topic of citizen complaints](#). All four candidates seemed to agree that something needs to change with SWBNO, whether it be an organizational structure change or a merger with the New Orleans Department of Public Works.

One thing is clear: even if our top mayoral candidates were not thinking about water and coastal issues before, they certainly are now!

It's Coastal Louisiana Awards Night, and the Oscar goes to . . .

The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL) announced that long-time Times-Picayune, The Advocate, and NOLA.com reporter [Mark Schleifstein](#) will be receiving CRCL's Lifetime Achievement Award for creating awareness in the community about the dire state of our coasts. [His hard-hitting reporting](#) during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, as well as his Pulitzer Prize-winning "Oceans of Trouble" series, have cemented his star on the figurative Coastal Louisiana Walk of Fame. We would be remiss if we didn't also recognize Tulane's very own [Dr. D. Jelagat Cheruiyot](#), Brother Martin High School, Sandy Nguyen of Coastal Communities Consulting, Anne Milling of Women of the Storm, Theresa Schmidt of KPLC, and Dominique Siebert of Louisiana SeaGrant, all of whom are being awarded the Coastal Stewardship Award for their contributions. The awards ceremony will be held in Baton Rouge on November 13th, and you can read more and sign up to attend [right here](#). Congratulations to all the distinguished coastal stars!

The Government Shutdown Affects Water and Environment, Too . . .

The government shutdown is the [talk of the nation this week](#), but while several government programs, such as social security and veterans' benefits, get a lot of attention (despite not being on the chopping block), the effect on

water and the environment has received very little attention in the national media. One of the worst-hit agencies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, already lost nearly 2,000 of its workers in the past year. The shutdown just adds insult to injury. [Only “1,734 of the EPA’s 15,166 employees” will continue working](#) during the government shutdown, while the rest are being furloughed, effectively shutting down the EPA. The effect will be felt in Clean Water Act enforcement, as well as other programs administered by the EPA, due to a lack of staff, [despite the programs continuing to be funded in life-and-safety-critical situations](#). Here’s to hoping the EPA can step up its emergency response efforts addressing the [latest environmental disaster in Louisiana](#).

Moreover, the now-renamed [Department of War’s priorities do not include the maintenance of the Mississippi River Levees](#) under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps [reports](#) that their construction projects in Louisiana are not interrupted, they will continue to operate navigation and hydropower facilities, and inspections and permitting will continue, as no employees in the New Orleans District have been furloughed, yet. However, the overall loss of the federal workforce and funding dedicated to our community makes the Greater New Orleans area less safe. This leads to another major effect of the government shutdown: Congress didn’t reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), meaning that no new NFIP policies can be issued and renewals can’t be processed. Throw this on top of [the struggles of homeowners](#), and this poses a significant challenge to New Orleans and Louisiana in general. [Nearly 500,000 Louisianans may be left without affordable flood insurance](#)—or any flood coverage at all—if Congress does not reauthorize NFIP.

Let’s just hope that a late-season hurricane doesn’t come calling before Congress passes an appropriations bill and ends the shutdown. Although the disaster relief fund will continue providing funds until it runs out, [FEMA will be nearly 4,000 employees short](#) (and this comes after the firing of nearly 2,000 employees earlier this year).

Coming Up:

[From the Driftless to the Delta: Rethinking Water Protections in the Mississippi River Watershed](#);
University of Iowa College of Law, Iowa City, IA;
October 30, 2025

[CRCL Coastal Stewardship Awards](#); Baton Rouge, LA; November 13, 2025

[Environmental Law & Policy Summit](#)
Tulane University Law School; New Orleans, LA;
March 5–7, 2026

Water jobs:

[Attorney](#); California Water Resources Control Board; Sacramento, CA

[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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