



TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
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Witnessing a functional government is a beautiful thing (one assumes)

This week kicked off the [2025 Louisiana legislative session](#), when those elected public servants really earn their [\\$16,800 annual salary](#) (plus mileage and per diem). Despite this being a session that is supposed to be limited to fiscal topics, over 800 bills were pre-filed. Feel free to peruse them on [the legislature's website](#) (it's actually pretty good!). There are water-y bills a plenty ([dozens!](#)), ranging from [restructuring the state's natural resources authority](#), creating [a new upland counterpart](#) to the state's coastal administration, [reorganizing metro New Orleans's flood protection authority](#), and [inflecting state law with the federal WOTUS saga](#). Our Institute should have some fact sheets on these and other bills available soon.

If the session opened with one single focus, it is the state's insurance crisis. Governor Landry opened the session with a [speech about insurance](#). But not the kind of insurance most Louisians were anxiously expecting. The governor's first focus is on car insurance, where [he blames both](#) trial lawyers (clearly he doesn't consider himself in that number despite the number of lawsuits he filed while the state's Attorney General) and the insurance industry (from where the independently elected state Insurance Commissioner Tim Temple hails). It's just part of the ongoing [a battle between the two men](#) over whose approach to lowering car insurance in the state will win out, or, if one wants to be [cynical](#), at least who will have to shoulder the blame when car insurance premiums don't go down. It's a curious idea for those of us who have had trouble getting both home and auto insurance in Louisiana that the insurers are reaping excess profits. If that were the case, wouldn't major insurers be coming to the state instead of [fleeing it](#)? If you [think climate change isn't happening](#), this must all be very confusing.

Of course, car insurance isn't the only [form of gambling](#) that is dragging Louisianians down, and perhaps the legislature will be able to apply keen problem-solving skills to those, as well. After all, at the time of writing, there are 43 bills with "insurance" in their summary. This Institute has [made some suggestions regarding Louisiana's insurance crisis](#), but it's not yet clear that any of those bills are building on those suggestions. But it's not too late. [There is still hope](#). [There is always hope](#)!

At our federal legislative body (yes, they still exist!) authorization for federal flood insurance (NFIP) [was renewed last month at the deadline \(again\)](#), but it's still in danger of expiring in September. It's [a pretty important program](#) for Louisiana property owners, and representatives from Louisiana and Mississippi are [proposing a bit of a fix](#) – extending that deadline to the end of 2026. Hardly solving the problem, but maybe buying a bit more time.

Old Water, New Land

How water got to Earth has been an important question to scientists who like to solve puzzles from billions of years away. The prevailing theory has been that early Earth didn't have enough hydrogen to form any great amount of water, and that hydrogen must have arrived via asteroids colliding with our baby planet. But a new [study](#) indicates that [the hydrogen from the Antarctic meteorite remnants of those asteroids came from earth, not from the asteroids themselves](#). Or so we simple [caveman lawyers](#) are led to believe.

But another recent study closer to home (in both time and space) is a little easier to decipher. A few years ago, [one of the small breaks in the levee near the mouth of the Mississippi River](#) started growing. And growing. It's now known as Neptune Pass, and it's the 10th largest river (by volume) in the United States. Most importantly for those who are invested in building land in Louisiana is that Neptune Pass is building a whole new sub-delta, to the point where it's the fastest growing bit of land in the state. Questions have abounded about where that land was coming from – was it really building new land or just moving around the land that was in the pass's newly [embiggened](#) footprint itself? [This new study](#) shows that it really is building new land by capturing and placing sediment that would otherwise have shot out of mouth of the river and tumbled down the continental shelf. Great news, right? Well, the growth of Neptune Pass has had impacts on the rest of that final (or first if you're coming in from sea) stretch of the river, making navigation trickier. That's why the Corps of Engineers is working to limit the Pass's further expansion, this week [publishing a final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact \(FONSI\)](#) on its pending project to reduce its flow. Opinions might differ on whether or not it's deserving of its [FONSI](#), but perhaps it's a result of the Corps trying to balance navigational needs with the incredible value of wetlands being built for free at a time when the state is backing away from spending \$3 billion on a manmade version of the distributary elsewhere in the parish (even though it's [still in the coastal agency's Annual Plan](#)). The hope is that the Corps has found some way to meet those navigation needs while not crippling the Pass's ability to deposit sediment and grow the otherwise shrinking state.

But even if the Neptune Pass news doesn't give you hope, even [just a fool's hope](#), there's another [new study](#) that might help if you're convinced we've [jumped the shark](#) globally. We might be able to head towards K2-18b! For the uninitiated, it's [a massive, watery planet 120 light years away](#). But what's really exciting is that the study shows the strongest indications yet of signs of life on another planet. It is the latest indication of microorganisms elsewhere in the galaxy. [Microorganisms, Gandalf!](#) All we have to do is achieve near-light speed, interstellar travel, put people on their way, do whatever geoengineering is necessary there, and, voila, we could recreate our current [microorganism-heavy Gulf](#)! Way easier than taking care of this watery planet, right?

Coming Up:

[71ST Annual Natural Resources & Energy Law
Institute](#)

July 17-19, 2025 Whistler, British Columbia

[Water in Americas' Human Landscapes: Tulane
Law & Policy Symposium](#)

June 16-18, 2025

Postponed until 2026

Water jobs:

[Government Affairs Advocate, Climate and Clean Energy; League of
Conservation Voters; Washington, D.C.](#)

[Senior Policy Analyst, Water Infrastructure; Environmental Policy
Innovation Center; Remote](#)



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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