

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
June 10, 2013

New York Opts to Stay in Business, Issues \$20 Billion Dollar Plan for Storm and Sea Level Rise Protection

Less than a year after Hurricane Sandy hammered home the message that New Orleans is not the only American coastal city facing dire risks from storms and changing climate, Mayor Bloomberg released a new [blueprint](#) for making New York City more resilient to those threats. Calling for floodwalls, levees, and a massive landfill project, “Sea Port City”, to act as a buffer the plan offers a glimpse at the sorts of things coastal cities are going to have to begin to consider if they want be places that stay in business as seas rise, storms are projected to intensify, and insurance gets more costly. Whether it is implementable, well time will tell.

EPA Settlement Requires \$1.6 Billion in Local Sewer Upgrades

Yes, this could be your town, but unless you live in Florida’s Miami-Dade County it isn’t –this time. In this latest development in the old infrastructure meets growth and the environment story that is playing out in much of America, EPA and Miami-Dade officials have agreed to a proposed [consent decree](#) under which the county will upgrade its sewerage infrastructure over the next 15 years to eliminate “combined sewage overflow”. Combined sewage overflow is the term for the mixing of sanitary sewage (we all know what that is) with waste water. The cost: \$1.6 billion. The benefits: Largely self-evident in a place with parks, beaches and recreational waterways. The source of the money: To be determined. The proposed settlement is open for [public comment](#) for 30 days.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame: The Latest on the RESTORE Act.

The Gulf Coast Restoration Council has released its [draft initial comprehensive plan](#) and [draft environmental assessment](#) to guide the expenditure of Clean Water Act fines that flow from the Deep Water Horizon spill. Still pending however are the Treasury rules that are/were to provide guidance about how RESTORE dollars would be accounted for and any preconditions for their release from the RESTORE Act trust fund. RESTORE Act trackers can compare the new draft plan to this Institute’s [analysis](#) of the “preliminary” draft initial plan previously issued. The Council will take [public comments](#) on the draft plan until June 24, 2013.

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 stewardship of water.

Coming up:

[June 16, 2013](#)

[GNOF Urban Water Series](#)

New Orleans BioInnovation Center
1441 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA

[June 16-21, 2013](#)

[EPA Region 6 Stormwater Conference](#)

New Orleans, LA

[June 18, 2013](#)

[NFIP: Preparing for Changes to Flood Ins.](#)

[Louisiana Resiliency Assistance Program](#)

Baton Rouge, LA

[June 18, 2013](#)

[Northshore Water Symposium](#)

9:30-11:30

Castine Center, Pelican Park
Mandeville LA,

Tulane Institute
on Water Resources Law & Policy

6329 Freret Street, Suite 155G
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-865-5982

<http://www.law.tulane.edu/enlaw/>

New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board Changes Clear Legislature. Next up, the Vote of the People.

Nothing is a sure bet in the Louisiana legislature, but a body barely able to pass a budget did manage to pass a [bill](#) that would reconfigure the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board. The revamp was widely called for, but agreeing to change something is not the same thing as agreeing what the changes should be, a truth this bill displayed. In the end the bill trimmed the Board's membership from 13 to 11, diminished the role of the City Council in board appointments, and added an independent commission vehicle for suggesting nominations, reduced the terms of board members to two four year terms. It was a bumpy ride and it is not over yet since the [next step](#) is a public vote on October 8.

IEA Calls for “No Cost” Actions on Climate, Warns Time Running Out

[Warning](#) that Earth could warm by 5 degrees Celsius (9 degrees Fahrenheit), an International Energy Agency [report](#) is urging that prompt action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is needed. The shift away from coal in the United States helped reduce U.S. CO₂ emissions by 200 metric tons in 2012 but more will be required according to the Agency. On the positive side, the IEA suggests that using existing “[no net cost](#)” options could make a real difference in holding temperature increases to the current 2 degree target.

Going Down—The Great Lakes Hit Historic Lows.

The Great Lakes are a little less great these days as the water levels in the lakes continue to drop, [hitting historic lows](#). For lakes that can be a thousand feet deep drops of a few feet may not seem like much but those drops are felt most acutely around the edges where the loss of a few feet may make a huge difference to navigation. Ships already have to carry lighter loads to handle the shallower port and channel depths, a change that can mean much in terms of cost and profit. Ironically some of the lower depths are attributable to the dredging of deeper channels, channels that in good times allow deeper draft ships to navigate but that also create bigger drains in the lakes. A wetter spring offers some hope but it will likely take years to make up the deficits that took years to create. Long range climate projections also don't bode well for higher lakes levels.

GNOF Urban Water Series Resumes Wednesday, June 16.

The Greater New Orleans Foundation's [Urban Water Series](#) continues June 16 at 4:00 p.m. at the New Orleans BioInnovation Center at 1441 Canal Street. The topic this week is “Green Alleys, Streets, and Neighborhoods” and will feature speakers from Portland, Oregon and Milwaukee. Refreshments will be served but attendance is limited. If this series doesn't make Wednesdays the newest date night nothing will.