

§ 3952. Priority Louisiana coastal wetlands restoration projects

(a) Priority project list

(1) Preparation of list

Within forty-five days after November 29, 1990, the Secretary shall convene the Task Force to initiate a process to identify and prepare a list of coastal wetlands restoration projects in Louisiana to provide for the long-term conservation of such wetlands and dependent fish and wildlife populations in order of priority, based on the cost-effectiveness of such projects in creating, restoring, protecting, or enhancing coastal wetlands, taking into account the quality of such coastal wetlands, with due allowance for small-scale projects necessary to demonstrate the use of new techniques or materials for coastal wetlands restoration.

(2) Task Force procedures

The Secretary shall convene meetings of the Task Force as appropriate to ensure that the list is produced and transmitted annually to the Congress as required by this subsection. If necessary to ensure transmittal of the list on a timely basis, the Task Force shall produce the list by a majority vote of those Task Force members who are present and voting; except that no coastal wetlands restoration project shall be placed on the list without the concurrence of the lead Task Force member that the project is cost effective and sound from an engineering perspective. Those projects which potentially impact navigation or flood control on the lower Mississippi River System shall be constructed consistent with section 3953 of this title.

(3) Transmittal of list

No later than one year after November 29, 1990, the Secretary shall transmit to the Congress the list of priority coastal wetlands restoration projects required by paragraph (1) of this subsection. Thereafter, the list shall be updated annually by the Task Force members and transmitted by the Secretary to the Congress as part of the President's annual budget submission. Annual transmittals of the list to the Congress shall include a status report on each project and a statement from the Secretary of the Treasury indicating the amounts available for expenditure to carry out this chapter.

(4) List of contents

(A) AREA IDENTIFICATION; PROJECT DESCRIPTION.—The list of priority coastal wetlands restoration projects shall include, but not be limited to—

(i) identification, by map or other means, of the coastal area to be covered by the coastal wetlands restoration project; and

(ii) a detailed description of each proposed coastal wetlands restoration project including a justification for including such project on the list, the proposed activities to be carried out pursuant to each coastal wetlands restoration project, the benefits to be realized by such project, the identification of the lead Task Force member to undertake

each proposed coastal wetlands restoration project and the responsibilities of each other participating Task Force member, an estimated timetable for the completion of each coastal wetlands restoration project, and the estimated cost of each project.

(B) PRE-PLAN.—Prior to the date on which the plan required by subsection (b) of this section becomes effective, such list shall include only those coastal wetlands restoration projects that can be substantially completed during a five-year period commencing on the date the project is placed on the list.

(C) Subsequent to the date on which the plan required by subsection (b) of this section becomes effective, such list shall include only those coastal wetlands restoration projects that have been identified in such plan.

(5) Funding

The Secretary shall, with the funds made available in accordance with section 3955 of this title, allocate funds among the members of the Task Force based on the need for such funds and such other factors as the Task Force deems appropriate to carry out the purposes of this subsection.

(b) Federal and State project planning

(1) Plan preparation

The Task Force shall prepare a plan to identify coastal wetlands restoration projects, in order of priority, based on the cost-effectiveness of such projects in creating, restoring, protecting, or enhancing the long-term conservation of coastal wetlands, taking into account the quality of such coastal wetlands, with due allowance for small-scale projects necessary to demonstrate the use of new techniques or materials for coastal wetlands restoration. Such restoration plan shall be completed within three years from November 29, 1990.

(2) Purpose of the plan

The purpose of the restoration plan is to develop a comprehensive approach to restore and prevent the loss of, coastal wetlands in Louisiana. Such plan shall coordinate and integrate coastal wetlands restoration projects in a manner that will ensure the long-term conservation of the coastal wetlands of Louisiana.

(3) Integration of existing plans

In developing the restoration plan, the Task Force shall seek to integrate the "Louisiana Comprehensive Coastal Wetlands Feasibility Study" conducted by the Secretary of the Army and the "Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Plan" prepared by the State of Louisiana's Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force.

(4) Elements of the plan

The restoration plan developed pursuant to this subsection shall include—

(A) identification of the entire area in the State that contains coastal wetlands;

(B) identification, by map or other means, of coastal areas in Louisiana in need of coastal wetlands restoration projects;

(C) identification of high priority coastal wetlands restoration projects in Louisiana

needed to address the areas identified in subparagraph (B) and that would provide for the long-term conservation of restored wetlands and dependent fish and wildlife populations;

(D) a listing of such coastal wetlands restoration projects, in order of priority, to be submitted annually, incorporating any project identified previously in lists produced and submitted under subsection (a) of this section;

(E) a detailed description of each proposed coastal wetlands restoration project, including a justification for including such project on the list;

(F) the proposed activities to be carried out pursuant to each coastal wetlands restoration project;

(G) the benefits to be realized by each such project;

(H) an estimated timetable for completion of each coastal wetlands restoration project;

(I) an estimate of the cost of each coastal wetlands restoration project;

(J) identification of a lead Task Force member to undertake each proposed coastal wetlands restoration project listed in the plan;

(K) consultation with the public and provision for public review during development of the plan; and

(L) evaluation of the effectiveness of each coastal wetlands restoration project in achieving long-term solutions to arresting coastal wetlands loss in Louisiana.

(5) Plan modification

The Task Force may modify the restoration plan from time to time as necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

(6) Plan submission

Upon completion of the restoration plan, the Secretary shall submit the plan to the Congress. The restoration plan shall become effective ninety days after the date of its submission to the Congress.

(7) Plan evaluation

Not less than three years after the completion and submission of the restoration plan required by this subsection and at least every three years thereafter, the Task Force shall provide a report to the Congress containing a scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of the coastal wetlands restoration projects carried out under the plan in creating, restoring, protecting and enhancing coastal wetlands in Louisiana.

(c) Coastal wetlands restoration project benefits

Where such a determination is required under applicable law, the net ecological, aesthetic, and cultural benefits, together with the economic benefits, shall be deemed to exceed the costs of any coastal wetlands restoration project within the State which the Task Force finds to contribute significantly to wetlands restoration.

(d) Consistency

(1) In implementing, maintaining, modifying, or rehabilitating navigation, flood control or irrigation projects, other than emergency actions, under other authorities, the Secretary, in con-

sultation with the Director and the Administrator, shall ensure that such actions are consistent with the purposes of the restoration plan submitted pursuant to this section.

(2) At the request of the Governor of the State of Louisiana, the Secretary of Commerce shall approve the plan as an amendment to the State's coastal zone management program approved under section 1455 of this title.

(e) Funding of wetlands restoration projects

The Secretary shall, with the funds made available in accordance with this chapter, allocate such funds among the members of the Task Force to carry out coastal wetlands restoration projects in accordance with the priorities set forth in the list transmitted in accordance with this section. The Secretary shall not fund a coastal wetlands restoration project unless that project is subject to such terms and conditions as necessary to ensure that wetlands restored, enhanced or managed through that project will be administered for the long-term conservation of such lands and waters and dependent fish and wildlife populations.

(f) Cost-sharing

(1) Federal share

Amounts made available in accordance with section 3955 of this title to carry out coastal wetlands restoration projects under this chapter shall provide 75 percent of the cost of such projects.

(2) Federal share upon conservation plan approval

Notwithstanding the previous paragraph, if the State develops a Coastal Wetlands Conservation Plan pursuant to this chapter, and such conservation plan is approved pursuant to section 3953 of this title, amounts made available in accordance with section 3955 of this title for any coastal wetlands restoration project under this section shall be 85 percent of the cost of the project. In the event that the Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator jointly determine that the State is not taking reasonable steps to implement and administer a conservation plan developed and approved pursuant to this chapter, amounts made available in accordance with section 3955 of this title for any coastal wetlands restoration project shall revert to 75 percent of the cost of the project: *Provided, however*, that¹ such reversion to the lower cost share level shall not occur until the Governor has been provided notice of, and opportunity for hearing on, any such determination by the Secretary, the Director, and Administrator, and the State has been given ninety days from such notice or hearing to take corrective action.

(3) Form of State share

The share of the cost required of the State shall be from a non-Federal source. Such State share shall consist of a cash contribution of not less than 5 percent of the cost of the project. The balance of such State share may take the form of lands, easements, or right-of-

¹ So in original. Probably should be capitalized.

way, or any other form of in-kind contribution determined to be appropriate by the lead Task Force member.

(4) Existing cost-sharing agreements

Paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (5) of this subsection shall not affect the existing cost-sharing agreements for the following projects: Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion, Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion, and Bonnet Carre Freshwater Diversion.

(5) Federal share in calendar years 1996 and 1997

Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) and (2), upon approval of the conservation plan under section 3953 of this title and a determination by the Secretary that a reduction in the non-Federal share is warranted, amounts made available in accordance with section 3955 of this title to carry out coastal wetlands restoration projects under this section in calendar years 1996 and 1997 shall provide 90 percent of the cost of such projects.

(Pub. L. 101-646, title III, §303, Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4779; Pub. L. 104-303, title V, §532, Oct. 12, 1996, 110 Stat. 3774.)

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (f)(4). Pub. L. 104-303, §532(1), substituted “(3), and (5)” for “and (3)”.

Subsec. (f)(5). Pub. L. 104-303, §532(2), added par. (5).

§ 3953. Louisiana coastal wetlands conservation planning

(a) Development of conservation plan

(1) Agreement

The Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator are directed to enter into an agreement with the Governor, as set forth in paragraph (2) of this subsection, upon notification of the Governor's willingness to enter into such agreement.

(2) Terms of agreement

(A) Upon receiving notification pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator shall promptly enter into an agreement (hereafter in this section referred to as the “agreement”) with the State under the terms set forth in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

(B) The agreement shall—

(i) set forth a process by which the State agrees to develop, in accordance with this section, a coastal wetlands conservation plan (hereafter in this section referred to as the “conservation plan”);

(ii) designate a single agency of the State to develop the conservation plan;

(iii) assure an opportunity for participation in the development of the conservation plan, during the planning period, by the public and by Federal and State agencies;

(iv) obligate the State, not later than three years after the date of signing the agreement, unless extended by the parties thereto, to submit the conservation plan to the Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator for their approval; and

(v) upon approval of the conservation plan, obligate the State to implement the conservation plan.

(3) Grants and assistance

Upon the date of signing the agreement—

(A) the Administrator shall, in consultation with the Director, with the funds made available in accordance with section 3955 of this title, make grants during the development of the conservation plan to assist the designated State agency in developing such plan. Such grants shall not exceed 75 percent of the cost of developing the plan; and

(B) the Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator shall provide technical assistance to the State to assist it in the development of the plan.

(b) Conservation plan goal

If a conservation plan is developed pursuant to this section, it shall have a goal of achieving no net loss of wetlands in the coastal areas of Louisiana as a result of development activities initiated subsequent to approval of the plan, exclusive of any wetlands gains achieved through implementation of section 3952 of this title.

(c) Elements of conservation plan

The conservation plan authorized by this section shall include—

(1) identification of the entire coastal area in the State that contains coastal wetlands;

(2) designation of a single State agency with the responsibility for implementing and enforcing the plan;

(3) identification of measures that the State shall take in addition to existing Federal authority to achieve a goal of no net loss of wetlands as a result of development activities, exclusive of any wetlands gains achieved through implementation of section 3952 of this title;

(4) a system that the State shall implement to account for gains and losses of coastal wetlands within coastal areas for purposes of evaluating the degree to which the goal of no net loss of wetlands as a result of development activities in such wetlands or other waters has been attained;

(5) satisfactory assurances that the State will have adequate personnel, funding, and authority to implement the plan;

(6) a program to be carried out by the State for the purpose of educating the public concerning the necessity to conserve wetlands;

(7) a program to encourage the use of technology by persons engaged in development activities that will result in negligible impact on wetlands; and

(8) a program for the review, evaluation, and identification of regulatory and nonregulatory options that will be adopted by the State to encourage and assist private owners of wetlands to continue to maintain those lands as wetlands.

(d) Approval of conservation plan

(1) In general

If the Governor submits a conservation plan to the Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator for their approval, the Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator shall, within one hundred and eighty days following receipt of such plan, approve or disapprove it.