

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation

Habitat Protection Program

Discussion Points for Public Comments on Environmental Permits – Part 2

Use these guidelines to develop written comments on public notices.

In your written comments always include...

- ✓ The **permit application number** or other agency reference number listed on the permit.
- ✓ Request that your comments be included in the project's official **public record**.
- ✓ Request that a **public hearing** be held for the community on the project.
- ✓ When you can, attach supporting information - photos, water quality data, newspaper clippings, wildlife sightings, etc., are helpful.
- ✓ Be professional - avoid inflammatory or inappropriate language.
- ✓ Watch for deadlines: **Check the date** at top of the public notice. *Deadlines are in calendar days, so you must include weekends.*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Section 404 (wetlands and habitat)

30-day deadline

- ✓ Is the proposed project **water dependent**? Is it a subdivision, which doesn't require a site near water, or is it a boat dock? *Permit applicants must demonstrate this as required by law.*
* * * Not included in DNR comments
- ✓ Has the applicant demonstrated that a **public need** for the project exists? Is plenty of housing already available where a subdivision is now being proposed? *(Required by law)*
- ✓ Does the permit include a **mitigation plan**? *(Required by law)*
* * * Not included in DNR comments
- ✓ What **natural resources** may be impacted or destroyed? For example, wetlands, rivers, streams, endangered species, floodplains, popular swimming and fishing areas, etc.
- ✓ What is the **scale** of the project, specifically the number of acres of wetlands destroyed, number of homes built, amount of fill placed, volume of sediment dredged?
- ✓ Will there be any **cumulative impacts** from this project, and how serious are they? Are other projects being built nearby?
- ✓ Can the applicant **minimize impacts** to wetlands or other resources?
- ✓ What **practical alternatives** can you suggest for the project so that fewer resources are impacted? For example, can the project be scaled down; can buildings or structures being sited differently?
- ✓ Is the project occurring on or in the floodplain of a waterway that has been recognized by the State of Louisiana's **Natural and Scenic Rivers Act**? *To check, call the Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries at (318) 343-4045 or visit www.wlf.state.la.us → Divisions: Fur and Refuge → Scenic Rivers.*
- ✓ Is there any **public benefit** from the project?

Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality – Water Quality Certificate

10-day deadline

- ✓ Are nearby **water resources** already **impaired** and not meeting their uses for swimming or fishing?
- ✓ Will the project **degrade** the **water quality** of nearby water resources? Will storm water be discharged into a nearby waterway?
- ✓ Does the proposed project include a permanent plan to treat **sewage**?
- ✓ Does the project include **erosion and sedimentation** control measures?

Louisiana Dept. of Natural Resources – Coastal Use Permits (coastal zone)

***25-day
deadline***

Refer to Corps and LDEQ sections above

- ✓ Is **public safety** a concern?
- ✓ How may the project affect the coastal community or damage the state's **coastal resources**?