



Everything New Orleans

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Educate the nation on 'America's Energy Coast'

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It has been said that in New Orleans, food is so central to our culture that we plan our next meal while eating our current one. I can now add that, on Saturday night, we were planning our next evacuation while still on our last one.

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But seriously, there are likely to be questions from the uninformed as to why New Orleans should be saved. We still need to educate the rest of the country as to the importance of South Louisiana to our nation's economy, and that those contributions have not come without sacrifices to our safety from storms.

The offshore oil industry, which provides 30 percent of our domestic oil and gas production, has also led to the construction of canals in the marsh for the laying of pipelines and movement of work boats.

This has allowed saltwater intrusion into those canals and the destruction of the wetlands that is so important to reducing storm surge.

In addition, maintaining the Mississippi River channel for the movement of cargo to and from the 31 state tributary system of the Mississippi, providing a significant boost to the economies of those states, has caused the loss of sediment into the Gulf of Mexico off the continental shelf, rather than building up southeast Louisiana's coastline.

I would suggest that the Legislature change our state license plate to say America's Energy Coast instead of Sportsman's Paradise, and that the pelican be replaced by a barrel of oil. The governor's plate number should be OIL 911.

Coastal and wetlands restoration is not a local issue, but rather a national economic security issue. It needs to be presented that way.

The cost to do this would be a fraction of the Iraq war cost, and would protect domestic, not foreign, energy assets.

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