

Carolyn Woosley

PUBLIC COMMENTS MADE TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY,
4:25PM, THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2002, NEW ORLEANS PORT, NEW ORLEANS,
LOUISIANA.

"I am a SW Louisiana native recently relocated from living many years in Southern California. I am a financial planner and a writer of plays. I just completed a year as Research Administrator/Coordinator in the Department of Geology & Geophysics of the University of New Orleans [UNO], and I highly recommend that department as a good resource for you as you proceed with your work and studies.

"Gentlemen and ladies, as you consider the relationship between Gulf of Mexico health and Louisiana coastal land loss, and as you have looked back over 100 years of oil and gas industry 'engineering experimentation', as one commissioner phrased it, please also look forward to impacts of international shipping. You see, we have perfectly encircled our Louisiana wetlands with salt [via ship channels and the Intracoastal Canal], and do not only consider the large ports [such as Houston and New Orleans], but also consider the small ports which, in this area, are not particularly small. The Lake Charles port is #12 in size in the nation; it competes with the Beaumont port complex and with Corpus Christi, the final one not having wetlands to consider, at least not any of which I am aware. These ports face the prospect of hosting this latest generation of 50' deep-draft hull ships. We have something called 'ship channels', and dredging of them is aggressively underway to accommodate these deep draft boats. [Since salt water flows beneath fresh water, these deepened and widened ship channels will become super highways for salt water entry into fragile wetlands.] However, international shipping is not going away. [If Lake Charles and Beaumont institute deep locks - big ticket items called for by 'Coast 2050', the port commissioners to whom I have talked fear that business will flee to Corpus Christi. By using Corpus, shipping concerns would not face navigational and financial obstacles which major locks will present.]

Therefore, I request that your dialogues do not stop at geo-political boundaries. These issues do not end at the Sabine River. Any dialogue which we have must include Texas, or Louisiana will not get very far. [Dredging of Texas ship channels will profoundly affect Louisiana wetlands and watersheds and, ultimately, the health of the ship channels themselves, as these byways convert to open water.]

My second point: I wish to frame the importance of the State of Louisiana in perhaps a new light. We are, perhaps, a Ground Zero. The health of Louisiana is, I submit, a strategic interest of the U.S.A. We produce a significant portion of the nation's oil and gas. A significant portion of imported oil comes through our waters and through our onshore infrastructure. We are home to a great deal of the nation's ageing petro-chemical industry. Lake Charles has, I believe, 17 petro-chemical plants. If Louisiana decided to turn off the spigot, so to speak, I do believe the nation would take note. [In recent history we have gone to war overseas to secure energy source-stability of nations producing the same amounts that Louisiana provides yearly.] [Also, other states have chosen not to

explore their non-renewable resources. They rely on La., Texas, Oklahoma and Alaska to supply them with oil and gas while they themselves make no, or little, effort to curtail inefficient uses - as SUV proliferation by the consumer, even though refusing to produce such oil & gas. I submit that, by default, these states push the nation into the arms of two other forms of energy: the far dirtier coal industry and the far more dangerous - to the public at large should disaster occur - nuclear industry. I suggest that serious financial disincentives be put into place in those states on gas guzzling oil & gas use. Louisiana, meanwhile, provides them with their energy 'fix'.]

"When Louisiana asks for funding, we are not asking for a handout. We have placed large sums of money in the U.S. Treasury [and since the mid-1970s we were supposed to be receiving some of those funds back to be used for remediation of this very fragile ecosystem which supports on- and offshore drilling and navigation. This land in some cases is under 3000 years old], and we are asking for a portion of that money back. That is money that would not be in the U.S. Treasury if we had not put it there in the first place.

"Finally, I request that your approach to ocean health, etc., be science-based, which is in contra-distinction to being engineering-based. I am sure that your approach is indeed science-based. However, in your considerations of these complex issues, I refer you to Dr. Chip Groat's work with the U.S.G.S. and to the white paper produced from a conference cohosted Fall 2000 in New Orleans by the USGS and by UNO and co-authored by Dr. Denise Reed of the Dept. of Geology & Geophysics, UNO. This white paper examines science-based approaches to the restoration and conservation of every single major ecosystem in the continental U.S.

"Thank you very much for this opportunity to address you."

Carolyn Shaddock Woosley, CFP
628 Cleveland St.
Lake Charles, LA 70601
337.436.6275
4911 Dryades St.
New Orleans, LA 70115
504.899.2195