



## Exhibit A: Executive Summary

ExhibitA\_ExecutiveSummary\_LA.pdf

### State of Louisiana

Division of Administration  
Office of Community Development  
Disaster Recovery Unit



## **Exhibit A: Executive Summary**

In Phase I, we described Louisiana's unique condition as a priceless commercial hub, a vital buoy of America's national security interests, and an irreplaceable cultural gumbo. The source of this value, our working coast – and more broadly, our Coastal Zone, is home to 40% of our nation's wetlands, sources 25% of its petrochemicals, provides 26% its seafood supply, and handles 20% of its annual waterborne commerce – with 500 million tons of cargo passing through Louisiana's deep-draft ports and navigation channels annually. In a nation of 50 equally-valued states, Louisiana can realistically claim, per capita, to be our nation's breadwinner and its fishing net.

We used gumbo as a metaphor in describing Louisiana's value. One thing all gumbos have in common is they start with a roux. The roux is a gumbo's backbone, on which the rest of the concoction is built. In this context, Louisiana is the roux for our nation. If we neglect it, the consequences will be far-reaching and irreversible. Carrying the metaphor further, Louisiana's coast – its working cultural hub – is the roux for our state. If we do not protect and maintain it as an epicenter of economic and social activity, the rest of our state – including urban areas like New Orleans and Baton Rouge – will have no impetus to remain relevant, or even viable as places.

Our coast is, in itself, a protective barrier. Louisiana, its coastal communities, and the nation it serves are tied together by our common vulnerabilities – storms, land loss, subsidence and sea level rise. As we saw during and immediately after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, events in Louisiana can have a market-moving economic impact on the nation. To highlight an example, if Port Fourchon in Lafourche Parish went offline for more than two weeks, it is estimated the American economy could lose up to 250,000 jobs.

Most Louisiana natives can recall a favored wetland that has since reverted to open water, or a cypress forest now dead on account of saltwater intrusion. Our risks and vulnerabilities do not lurk in the shadows, nor do they only appear when a tropical event occurs. In short, we have been on the frontlines of an environmental battle for multiple generations. Louisiana's vulnerabilities – land loss, subsidence,

and sea level rise – are conditions that will impact all the coastal areas in the United States. At risk is a generation of water-dependent cultural, social and economic activity, and perhaps a permanent breach of our nation’s symbiotic connection with the sea. We need a plan to address the impacts of these vulnerabilities on coastal communities in a systematic way and on a large scale.

HUD’s definition of resilience is “the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions.” In the past decade, Louisiana has withstood, responded to, and rapidly recovered from hurricanes Katrina (2005), Rita (2005), Gustav (2008), Ike (2008), Tropical Storm Lee (2011) and Isaac (2012), as well as the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill (2010). Through these events, Louisiana has maintained – and in many ways has grown – its economic and cultural value. Our state has proven to the nation and the world it has the fortitude and ability to be resilient. Pivoting into the future, it has a one-of-a-kind opportunity – and we believe obligation – to stand as the nation’s laboratory developing best practices in resilience that are both scalable and transferrable to all 50 states.

This application is an expression of Louisiana’s intent to remain on the cutting edge in developing the next generation of resilient solutions. We have developed the nation’s first comprehensive [Coastal Master Plan \(CMP\)](#) specifically tasked with rebuilding and preserving our coast. The “resilience gap” in the CMP is the human piece of the equation, which this and NDRC applications from Orleans, Jefferson and St. Tammany parishes seek to address. In Phase 1, we proposed a resilience policy framework we called the ‘Louisiana Resilience Framework (LRF).’ It suggested a common sense approach combining best quantitative data with qualitative data gathered through extensive community outreach to develop equitable solutions for our most vulnerable populations.

In Phase 2, the LRF evolved to become [Louisiana’s Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments, or LA SAFE](#). Through this resilience policy framework, we have come to accept hard truths: Our coast is disappearing. [Land loss is going to get worse before it gets better – as will our exposure](#)

[to risk \(Fig1.pdf\)](#). We have no choice but to rethink how we are settling and developing our Coastal Zone communities. To respond, LA SAFE hinges on three core ideas:

- 1) Land is disappearing; therefore, we have no choice but to **resettle** communities we cannot fortify;
- 2) We cannot survive, let alone thrive, without our working coast. Moreover, that coast cannot survive without a robust connection between economic activity and the workforce that drives it. To this end, we must **retrofit** strategically-located vital communities so they may withstand future increasing risk;
- 3) As land disappears, we must maximize available high-ground territories, incentivizing high-quality development intended to foster economic and population growth. We must **reshape** these communities to fully maximize their highest and best uses.

Through this application, we have proposed the creation of a new program, the LA SAFE Fund. The Fund is our mechanism to work with local communities, exchange best available information and develop project-based solutions in accordance with the Resettle, Retrofit and Reshape typologies. To launch the Fund, we have proposed an initial 10 projects across all three categories. We have also included an unprogrammed project request to capitalize the Fund. We believe this is an opportunity to pivot from our long-term recovery efforts of the last decade toward a more resilient future, both for Louisiana and, as a laboratory, the nation as a whole.