



May 6, 2020



Natural Resources Committee
Louisiana State Senate



Dear Committee Members,



The oil and natural gas industry has been the economic engine for our region for decades. It spurs employment, innovation, a robust economy and is the number one private investor in our coast. While the industry faces a dire need of economic recovery due to devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the misguided legal actions that attack our state’s leading environmental partner and economic driver are not in the best interest of our state or its people.



The energy industry has played a major role in the development of our communities and our coast. It’s the very industry that built our state and continues to power our future. For generations, revenues created by energy exploration have been critical for us to construct new roads, schools, hospitals, and neighborhoods, as well as build and protect our coast. Together, we accomplished these goals directly through support of the energy industry and the encouragement of our leaders.



These efforts have helped direct hundreds of millions of dollars and resources towards coastal protection projects each year. According to the State Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, in 2020, the state will gain more land than we are expected to lose - an incredible milestone that was a direct result of the industry, state, scientific partners and communities working together.



A small group of trial lawyers and a few parish officials threaten to stop this progress and limit the economic potential of our working coast. This threat makes it critical to reaffirm that current law outlines it is the state that should enforce state-issued permits. Addressing this threat is the purpose of SB 359.



When parishes decide to sue the oil and natural gas industry, it directly impacts our friends, our families, our neighbors and the businesses that are part of the foundation of our communities. While working together, we have navigated through the challenges and celebrated all of the innovations and successes we have achieved. Lawsuits have achieved nothing after more than seven years. Now is a critical time to work together in our communities, instead of looking for answers in courtrooms. **We stand strong with the industry in support of Senate Bill 359.**





Senate Bill 359 would accomplish several pertinent issues:

- Remove roadblocks, set by a small group of trial lawyers, that impede productive efforts to protect our coast and put the state on a stronger path forward in collaboration with the industry, scientific partners and local communities.
- Reaffirm the state's responsibility to enforce permits issued to oil and natural gas companies, according to issues of state concern.
- Ensure that a small set of trial lawyers and a few parish officials cannot threaten the future of our entire state's economy and cost tens of thousands of jobs for hard-working Louisianians, when they are needed the most.

The best way to preserve each of our economic and coastal futures is by working with the oil and natural gas industry, not against it.

Sincerely,

Bayou Industrial Group
 Consumer Energy Alliance
 Greater Baton Rouge Industry Alliance
 Greater Iberia Chamber of Commerce
 Grow Louisiana Coalition
 Gulf Economic Survival Team
 Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce
 Lake Area Industry Alliance

Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
 Louisiana Coalition for Common Sense
 Louisiana Lawsuit Abuse Watch
 Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association
 Louisiana Oil & Gas Association
 One Acadiana
 Pelican Institute for Public Policy
 Port of Iberia
 River Region Chamber of Commerce
 South Central Industrial Association
 The Chamber Southwest Louisiana
 Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce
 West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce