Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Management Conference

Resolution to Support Scientific Research and Legislative Action to Reduce the Size and Growth of Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia

August 2017

*Summary: This resolution supports continued scientific research and additional legislative action to reduce the size and growth of the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic Zone.*

WHEREAS, the area of low oxygen that forms each summer off the Louisiana coast, referred to as Gulf Hypoxia was the largest ever recorded in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the spread of hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico continues to be a matter of concern for its ongoing and potential impacts on species important for commercial and recreational fisheries that move between offshore and estuarine waters, including those of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary system; and

WHEREAS, scientists at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) in Cocodrie, Louisiana, in cooperation with researchers at Louisiana State University, other universities, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicted that the size of the annual hypoxic zone in 2017 could be the largest on record, and this result was borne out in the summer mapping cruise carried out by LUMCON and LSU; and

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana has participated in the national Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force charged with addressing the Gulf Hypoxia problem since 1997, and the *Action Plan for Reducing Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico*, which calls for reducing nutrient loading from the Mississippi-Atchafalaya Rivers to the Gulf by 20% by the year 2025; and

WHEREAS, the improvement of the conditions of the Gulf and local waterways, and reduction of eutrophication and related problems of nutrient inputs, have been key parts of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan and the Water Quality component of its Ecological Management Action Plan since the development of those initiatives; and

WHEREAS, programs and projects being undertaken in the BTNEP Region by state and federal agencies such as the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Soil and Water Conservation and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service; non-governmental organizations such as Ducks Unlimited and the Nature Conservancy; and private industry and landowners, many of them working in cooperation with BTNEP, are helping to reduce nutrient inputs in the Barataria-Terrebonne estuary system; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, as the BTNEP Management Conference has expressed its support for these efforts on a number of previous occasions, the Management Conference hereby reaffirms its support for the national and state effort to reduce hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico and fulfill the commitments and goals of the Gulf Hypoxia *Action Plan*, including the critical scientific role played by LUMCON and its associated Louisiana universities in the annual summer mapping cruise that measures the size of the hypoxic zone, the trend of its size, and the effects of actions aimed at its reduction, and conveys this support to Louisiana’s Governor, Congressional delegation, and other state officials.