



## ACCORD FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF AMERICA'S ENERGY COAST Framework for Action

*America's Energy Coast, an initiative of the America's WETLAND Foundation, brings together leaders of government and industry, the national environmental and conservation community, academia, and major coastal interests throughout the region of the four energy-producing states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to develop common solutions to ensure a sustainable coastal environment and the inextricably linked activities critical to the nation's energy and economic security.*

*America's Energy Coast Accord recommendations were developed through consensus by participants with diverse interests. As such, no single recommendation represents the views, mission or legislative agenda of any one organization participating in the process, nor should the Accord Action Framework, in any way, presume to redefine stated purposes or policy positions of any of its participating organizations or industries.*

### GOAL

**America's Energy Coast – Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama – to serve as a platform for identifying innovative solutions to complex challenges for energy producing states along the U.S. Gulf Coast:**

- *A forum on environmental, economic and social issues and critical actions necessary to sustain the values of this strategic coastal region;*
- *An agent of change to manage risks by reducing vulnerabilities to economic, social and environmental assets that support domestic energy security for America.*

## **PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES**

- **Secure Sustainable Energy**
- **Conserve and Restore Natural Resources and Coastal Environments**
- **Promote Community Resiliency**

## **ACCORD ACTIONS: ROUND ONE**

**Action #1:** Develop resilient strategies, capacity, and intellectual capital for communities in vulnerable coastal landscapes that are critical to domestic energy production

**Action #2:** Secure domestic energy for consumers through continued exploration, development, production, transportation and refining of conventional resources; develop and deliver alternative energy sources; and promote energy conservation

**Action #3:** Sustain engineered and environmental infrastructure utilizing both natural and man-made resources

**Action #4:** Make conservation and restoration of marine and wildlife habitat a national imperative

**Action #5:** Develop opportunities for climate stewardship

**Action #6:** Resolve inconsistencies and conflicts in Federal policies that hinder sustainable energy development, ecosystem restoration and conservation efforts

## **SPECIFIC ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Action #1:** Develop resilient strategies, capacity and intellectual capital for communities in vulnerable coastal landscapes that are critical to domestic energy production

**Context:**

*Many communities supporting energy development along America's Energy Coast are critical to the nation's domestic energy security. Issues such as quality of life, housing and economic challenges, relevant education and skills development, affordable insurance, and secure and protected infrastructure must be addressed in order to build capacity in the region for sustaining and expanding energy and environmental assets.*

- Determine actions necessary to enhance energy and environmental assets in the region
  - Promote interdisciplinary learning across all grade levels based on sustainability principles
  - Promote technology and skills required to enhance energy and environmental assets
  - Establish a Regional Workforce Development Consortia.
    - Coordinate ongoing workforce development programs and initiatives and opportunities to alleviate limited labor skills
    - Promote technologies to advance skills and develop intellectual capital for export
    - Attract workers to fill gaps in sustaining optimum performance of the region
    - Establish a joint cooperative between industry and education to define skills, curricula and workforce productivity requirements for the future
- Accelerate OCS Revenue Sharing for coastal energy-producing states for restoration and protection of natural and built infrastructure in coastal communities
- Establish National Working Group on Insurability
  - Develop comparisons of how threatened communities address insurance issues, including consideration of effective models
  - Provide clearinghouse of information
- Promote non-structural approaches to community resiliency
  - Educate communities about flood proofing of homes and businesses
  - Provide clearinghouse of information on availability of existing funding sources, building codes, etc.
  - Encourage use of zoning, safe housing, and evacuation routes for locating and protecting vital infrastructure

**Action #2:** Secure domestic energy through continued exploration, development, production, transportation, and refining of conventional resources; develop and deliver alternative energy sources; and promote energy conservation

**Context:**

*The most developed system of energy recovery and transportation is found within the reaches of America's Energy Coast. With a complex exploration, development, refining and delivery system, the region is best suited to meet future domestic energy needs and to continue to provide technological solutions for advanced energy recovery. This includes expanding to new "greener" and alternative energy resources in an area where skilled energy workers and intellectual capital are available.*

- Identify opportunities for alternative energy development in the region
- Promote pilot projects and collaborations to recapture CO2 and to demonstrate feasibility of realizing geo-pressure, geo-thermal, and waste heat recovery for "greener" oil recovery
  - Advance technology for recovery utilizing geothermal, geo-pressure
  - Promote investment in development of private or common carrier delivery system for CO2
  - Help define market for "greener" oil recovery
- Design innovative energy generation plants to re-use emissions and bi-products for power generation
- Identify barriers to and potential solutions for delivery of alternative energy for access to power grids
- Enhance science and engineering capabilities and create long term opportunities for research and development in all phases of the energy supply and demand system

**Action #3:** Sustain engineered and environmental infrastructure utilizing both natural and man-made resources

**Context:**

*Along the vulnerable Gulf coastal region, threats to energy sustainability often take the form of damage to or loss of critical infrastructure that is essential for safe, environmentally sound energy exploration and development and for the movement of commerce in and out and across the country through its transportation network.*

- Pursue funding for manmade and natural infrastructure improvements.
- Review existing authorizations, pending legislation and budget allocations to ensure adequate funding is available to secure threatened and vulnerable infrastructure
  - Adequate funding for Department of Homeland Security to identify and mitigate threats to energy security
  - Adequate funding for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging programs, including maximum beneficial use of materials generated
- Utilize Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund fully for their intended purposes

- Create infrastructure inventory and propose new policies for sustaining critical infrastructure
  - Identify and prioritize the most vulnerable infrastructure issues
    - Convene regional working group to gather input from infrastructure managers at local, state, and Federal levels to identify vulnerable projects/issues, assess needs, and strategize solutions
    - Issue white papers on each area (land, rail, water, and intangibles, such as intellectual capital) with recommendations for members of the America's Energy Coast Congressional delegations
  - Report on infrastructure projects that have been authorized but not been funded
  - Propose policy recommendations to America's Energy Coast Congressional Members that include natural and manmade issues and infrastructure, existing and proposed land, rail, and water projects, including both environmental restoration and protection.

**Action #4:** Make conservation and restoration of marine and wildlife habitat a national imperative

**Context:**

*Some of the most significant and threatened marine and wildlife habitat in the world is found along America's energy coast. Coastal wetlands in Louisiana are disappearing at the rate of 17 square miles a year and some parts of Texas beaches are eroding by as much as 10 feet a year; along with it, habitat for dozens of threatened and endangered species. We must ensure that significant ecosystem services of natural marine and wildlife habitats are restored, conserved and recovered for generations to come as part of a high priority national imperative.*

- Assure comprehensive regional ecosystem restoration program with sustained and sufficient funding, with immediate action directed to areas of most immediate need.
  - Review pending and potential legislation and target programs and funding sources to determine best vehicles to address urgent habitat/ecosystem needs.
  - Work with the Federal government to restore the Mississippi River to its delta, thereby directly enhancing the sustainability of southeast Louisiana and the cities and communities in this rapidly deteriorating coastal zone.
  - Identify specific priority restoration projects, locations, and estimated costs and Federal/state funding required.
  - Convene summit on habitat sustainability for Mississippi flyway
- Engage states of the Mississippi River basin in dialogue regarding river sediments and freshwater presently forced away from the lower Mississippi reaches and coastal states due to federally maintained structures, locks and dams in the upper Mississippi region.

**Action #5:** Develop opportunities for climate stewardship

**Context:**

*Sea level rise, temperature change and other climate change impacts over the next century could challenge the security of natural, industrial, and urban infrastructure and increase risks to the economic productivity and environmental sustainability of America's Energy Coast.*

- Encourage incorporation of potential climate change impacts into all phases of future restoration and infrastructure projects in the region to promote sustainability into the next century.
- Promote scientific understanding of climate change and its influence on coastal landforms; provide best available scientific information for future coastal protection and development measures, including wetland restoration and flood control and hurricane protection projects, and infrastructure, community, housing, and manufacturing development.
- Promote low green house gas (GHG) energy development as part of a diverse and sustainable energy policy.
- Support the establishment of a Federal GHG reporting registry to precede Federal target for GHG reductions; assure individual states the ability to establish complementary strategies for achieving the required reductions.
- Encourage knowledge transfer and development of innovative technologies that provide for GHG reduction.
- Promote continued efforts to improve energy efficiency and conservation standards.
- Encourage effective climate stewardship at all levels of government and support Federal efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions commensurate with strategy development necessary at the state level to reach specified targets based on information developed from a Federal GHG reporting registry.

**Action #6:** Resolve inconsistencies and conflicts in Federal/state/local policies that hinder sustainable energy development, ecosystem restoration and conservation efforts.

**Context:**

*In this region, there is a lack of comprehensive systemic approaches to sustaining the nation's energy assets and natural resources and conflicting missions of Federal, state and local agencies undermine and create obstacles that can delay or prevent ecosystem restoration, conservation and sustainability. In a broader sense, no comprehensive Federal approach exists to address the nation's water resource issues or to prioritize systemic solutions for discreet challenges. Among the nation's most important horizon issues are water quantity and quality and these actions recognize the need for greater cooperation among Federal agencies and a more holistic approach to ecosystem and water resource solutions.*

- Create an inventory of conflicts, estimate costs of those conflicts, and develop strategies to address them.

- Call for creation of a Federal Water Resources Working Group of Federal agencies with jurisdiction over a wide array of water resource issues, Congressionally or Administratively mandated to collaborate among jurisdictions and financing mechanisms to build comprehensive solutions and to identify and target funding streams to ensure cooperative action and expedient government response to water resource issues that impact America's Energy Coast and, therefore, national security.
  - Develop inventory of water resource requirements and potential challenges for ecosystems, communities, and businesses along America's Energy Coast.
- Serve as a catalyst for implementing comprehensive solutions to water quality and quantity problems, such as calling for full funding for Hypoxia Action Plan.
- Support establishment of regional governance mechanisms for the Gulf of Mexico that could serve as a recipient of Federal funds for a variety of system-wide ecosystem priorities.

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