

FEMA PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE STATE OF LOUISIANA OFFICE OF RISK MANAGEMENT AND COASTAL PROTECTION AND RESTORATION AUTHORITY BEACH REPAIRS – WEST BELLE HEADLAND REPAIR PROJECT, TE-0176 (FEMA-4577-DR-LA-00337)

Interested parties are hereby notified that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has prepared a draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed West Belle Headland Repair Alternative to reestablish the geomorphic and ecological form and function of West Belle Headland which was constructed by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) under the TE-0143/0118 project and subsequently damaged from erosion caused by Hurricane Zeta, through beach, dune, and intertidal marsh habitat creation and shoreline reinforcement by means of fill placement utilizing Gulf of Mexico offshore (Outer Continental Shelf [OCS]) sand sources.

The project area covers approximately 17,500 linear feet of formerly restored coastal barrier headland located immediately west of West Belle Pass, approximately 8,500 linear feet of new intertidal marsh creation inland of the restored headland, 2 sediment borrow areas located in the Gulf of Mexico on the OCS within South Pelto 12 and Ship Shoal 88 Lease Blocks, an existing dredged access channel west of the headland, and 2 sediment pump-out areas and conveyance corridor alignments located in State waters of the Gulf of Mexico within Lafourche Parish, Louisiana.

The proposed project is to repair extensive damage from Hurricane Zeta to a nearly (approximately 80 percent) completed barrier headland restoration project (TE-0143/0118) that was being constructed to provide dune, beach and salt-marsh habitat and a buffer to reduce the forces and effects of wave action, saltwater intrusion, storm surge and tidal currents on the West Belle Headland estuary and interior coastal wetlands. The loss of TE-0143/0118 project components from Hurricane Zeta effects exposes oil and gas infrastructure and sensitive marsh habitat inland of the West Belle Headland to the forces and effects of increased wave action, saltwater intrusion, storm surge and tidal currents.

The sub-recipient, the Louisiana Office of Risk Management, seeks federal grant funds for this action eligible under a Presidential Disaster Declaration, signed on January 12, 2021 (FEMA-4577-DR-LA). The primary purpose of this project is to repair the extensive damages sustained from Hurricane Zeta to the nearly completed TE-0143/0118, which was being constructed to reestablish the geomorphic and ecological form and function of the West Belle Headland.

Prior to Hurricane Zeta, the project area was projected to endure land loss and shoreline erosion of approximately 207 acres of supratidal habitat, 173 acres of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), designated critical habitat for the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), storm protection for the Timbalier Bay Estuarine System, and protection of oil and gas infrastructure. The alternatives considered include:

1. No Action Alternative; and
2. West Belle Headland Repair Alternative (Proposed Action).

A draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been prepared in accordance with FEMA Instruction 108-1-1 and DHS Instruction 023-01-001-01, pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as implemented by Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Parts 1500-1508 (40 CFR 1500-1508), promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

The purpose of the draft SEA is to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed action on the physical and human environment. This draft SEA summarizes the purpose and need, affected environment, and potential environmental consequences associated with the proposed action.

The draft FONSI is FEMA's finding that the Proposed Action would not have a significant effect on the human and natural environment. The draft SEA and FONSI are available for review at the following locations:

- Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, 150 Terrace Ave., Baton Rouge, LA
 - o Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm; and
- Lafourche Parish Government, 4876 Hwy 1, Raceland, LA
 - o Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm.

This public notice will run in The Baton Rouge Advocate and The Houma Courier for five (5) days on Wednesday, March 20, 2024; Saturday, March 23, 2024; Tuesday, March 26, 2024; Friday, March 29, 2024; and Monday, April 1, 2024.

The document can also be downloaded from FEMA's website at <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa/supplemental-environmental-23> and from CPRA's website at <https://coastal.la.gov/>.

There will be a 30-day comment period beginning on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, and concluding on Thursday April 18, 2024, at 4:00 pm.

Written comments may be mailed to: DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY-FEMA EHP – WEST BELLE HEADLAND REPAIR, 1500 MAIN STREET, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, 70802. Comments may be emailed to fema-liro-ehp-pa@fema.dhs.gov. Based on FEMA's findings to date, no significant adverse environmental effects are anticipated. However, if FEMA receives new information that results in a change from no adverse effects, then FEMA would revise the findings and issue a second public notice allowing time for additional comments. However, if no substantive comments are received, the draft EA and associated draft FONSI will become final and this Notice of Availability will also serve as the final Public Notice. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in the final documents.