

Draft Resolution – Louisiana Oyster Task Force May 2017

Statement of support for continued efforts to address the problem of the Gulf Hypoxic Zone

WHEREAS, the large area of low oxygen or hypoxia that forms each year in Louisiana's coastal waters is an issue of concern for the state's seafood and fishing industries, including oyster production in waters influenced by the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers; and

WHEREAS, the low oxygen levels are caused by loading of nutrients from the Mississippi River Basin, and improving the Gulf hypoxia problem requires lowering those inputs by reducing nutrient loading into the river and the Gulf; and

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana, along with 12 other states along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, as well as federal agencies, stakeholders, and researchers, has been working to address this problem since 1997 as part of the national Gulf Hypoxia Task Force; and

WHEREAS, the agreement by all these parties in the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan calls for reaching a 20% reduction in nutrient loading to the Gulf of Mexico from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers by the year 2025 through their joint efforts, as a first step to reducing the average annual size of the Gulf Hypoxic Zone to 5000 square kilometers/1950 square miles by the year 2035; and

WHEREAS, achieving this reduction will benefit fishing, seafood, and general water quality in the bays, estuaries, and coastal waters of Louisiana, as well as reducing negative impacts on those waters from river diversion projects built for coastal restoration;

THEREFORE, the Louisiana Oyster Task Force expresses its support for the continued effort by Louisiana and the states and agencies on the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force to achieve the goals agreed to in the Action Plan for Reducing Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.