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GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana

ROBERT J. BARHAM  
SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

March 28, 2014

Herb Leedy  
Environmental Enforcement Branch  
Bureau of Safety & Environmental Enforcement  
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd  
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394

**RE: Ewing Banks 947 "A" structure**

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has been in substantive discussions with Freeport-McMoran Oil & Gas regarding the possible reefing of their Ewing Banks 947 "A" structure. EW-947 "A" was toppled by Hurricane Ike in 2008. The Department is aware that this toppling does not fit the Bureau of Safety & Environmental Enforcement's recent Interim Policy Document.

The Department respectfully requests that BSEE consider granting a departure to Freeport-McMoran for the reefing of EW-947 "A" on several grounds. The Department's Artificial Reef Program has a mission to preserve fisheries habitat while minimizing user conflict. In the five-plus years the structure has been on bottom, it has established a fouling community and now supports a thriving assemblage of fish. To reef the structure in place would put it beyond the most shrimp effort, the user group most frequently affected by artificial reefs.

Freeport-McMoran has completely removed seven of their eight structures toppled by Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike. Their strong history indicates that they are not engaging in ocean-dumping and that toppled structures will not become a common part of the Artificial Reef Program. Finally, Freeport-McMoran has already provided the Department with numerous drawings indicating that only the structural steel of the jacket will be reefed, and that all debris has been removed from the surrounding seafloor.

The Department feels that Freeport-McMoran has been a responsible partner and hopes that BSEE will grant approval to this unique opportunity.

Sincerely,

Robert Barham  
Secretary, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries